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Sixtieth session

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23rd plenary meeting
Friday, 23 September 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Momodu Koroma, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Koroma (Sierra Leone): The delegation of the Republic of Sierra Leone wishes to express its profound appreciation for the significant contribution of the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session to the work of the Assembly and to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the leadership of this body at its sixtieth session. You and your predecessor will always have a special place in the history of the United Nations as Presidents of the General Assembly at the height of the Organization's reform process.

The United Nations was founded on the principle of multilateral cooperation for the maintenance of international peace and security. For 60 years, it has been the focus of its Members — rich and poor, big and small — for carrying out that critical responsibility. Today, for many of its Members, the Organization is the great hope, not only for the achievement of peace and security, but also for the attainment of every objective of human aspiration, particularly development, human rights, freedom and democracy.

The United Nations was designed to serve the world of the aftermath of the Second World War — a world different in many ways from today's world. That is why my delegation has welcomed with total commitment reforms in the United Nations system to reflect the realities of today's world, and we will continue to participate fully in the reform process.

We welcome the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of last week's summit and applaud the negotiations that led to its adoption by consensus. The success of those negotiations indicate that, in spite of our differences and individual sovereign interests, Member States recognize that we have more things in common than things that divide us and that, for a better world, common interests must enjoy precedence over individual interests.

The rhetoric that has accompanied the outcome document has been impressive and reassuring, especially for developing countries and countries in conflict or emerging from conflict. If those soothing statements are matched by action, this year's United Nations summit and General Assembly session will have a landmark effect on the Organization and on the world. We are optimistic that it will.

This is the last Assembly session before the completion of the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) at the end of December. UNAMSIL has achieved successes that are unique in the history of United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Sierra Leoneans will forever remember the positive difference that the Mission made in their

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country's crisis and in their lives. For that, we can never sufficiently thank the United Nations and the entire international community for coming to our rescue and for standing by us when we could not stand alone. In particular, we are profoundly grateful to countries that contributed troops to UNAMSIL and countries that financially supported the Mission.

With a tremendous feeling of relief, we welcome the proposal to constitute an integrated United Nations office to succeed UNAMSIL, with the objective of supporting Sierra Leone in continuing to address critical areas of concern, including the causes of the conflict, consolidating the peace, human rights, development, legal, judicial and governance reforms, the rule of law and security. That measure has allayed the fears of Sierra Leoneans that UNAMSIL's departure would create a security vacuum and would mark the end of programmes associated with the Mission. We eagerly look forward to yet another success in the United Nations peacekeeping experiment in Sierra Leone.

Today, the Organization is preparing to transform its peacekeeping functions in Sierra Leone to meet some of the post-conflict needs of the country. That is a landmark decision that could serve as a model for effective coordination of strategies and programmes among the United Nations, its agencies and programmes, and organizations and development partners in countries emerging from conflict.

We note with interest that the architecture and plans for the operation of the new integrated office were based on close and extensive cooperation among relevant parties of the United Nations Secretariat and various United Nations agencies and organizations that constituted the country team. Sierra Leone hopes that that process of consultation and cooperation will continue. We urge the United Nations Mission to work closely with existing national institutions and with other initiatives that we have set up over the past five years to tackle post-conflict problems. We have no doubt that the new office will provide a "guinea pig" for the work of the proposed United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, to which we will spare no effort to lend support.

As members are aware, it is not enough to establish these short-term yet essential post-conflict bridges; what we desperately need is the mobilization of resources, including those required for capacity-building for sustainable economic and social development. The objective is not merely to ensure that Sierra Leone and other countries emerging from conflict do not slide back into conflict; rather, the ultimate objective must be to ensure that Sierra Leoneans do not remain in abject poverty.

The creation of the Peacebuilding Commission will be in consonance with the views expressed by my country's President five years ago when, from this rostrum at the Millennium Summit, he spoke about the imperative of adaptation by the United Nations. He pleaded with the Organization to continue to adapt and equip itself to deal with the perennial problems and new manifestations of human insecurity and underdevelopment. He also spoke about some of the ways in which Sierra Leone had tested the capacity of the United Nations to adapt itself to respond to local and global challenges.

The three main elements — development, peace and security and human rights — highlighted in the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" (*A/59/2005*) and in the outcome document (*resolution 60/1*) of last week's High-level Plenary Meeting are all interrelated. However, as the document states, development is a central goal by itself. That is why no one should be surprised at the importance that Sierra Leone — a poor country emerging from a devastating conflict — attaches to the development cluster of the outcome document, including the section on ways in which to meet the special needs of Africa.

The people of Sierra Leone continue to attach importance to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to the commitments our heads of State or Government made in the Assembly five years ago. The principal purpose of the just-concluded High-level Plenary Meeting was to renew our determination to fulfil those commitments.

The General Assembly would be interested to know that the food security objective of ensuring by the year 2007 that no Sierra Leonean goes to bed hungry is consistent with, and directly linked to, the MDGs; so are the objectives embodied in our Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. We are determined to continue to work with our development partners to achieve those objectives.

For the overwhelming majority of us, "freedom from want" means the collective national and international responsibility to eradicate extreme

poverty, the collective responsibility to ensure that people in all regions of the world enjoy, first and foremost, their human right to food, basic health care, education, clean water and other amenities that sustain life. As we see it, "freedom from fear" means the collective responsibility of all States to remove and eliminate threats to the safety and security of people everywhere, such as the illicit traffic and use of small arms and the accumulation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. "Freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" also imply the responsibility to accept without reservation the relationship between disarmament and development.

Furthermore, "freedom to live in dignity" implies the collective responsibility of all States to ensure that their peoples are treated with dignity. This includes the protection of all the economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In our view, that responsibility implies cooperation and assistance where necessary to enhance the capacity for prevention and protection. In this connection, Sierra Leone is grateful for the assistance it continues to receive from the United Nations in the field of human rights.

Sierra Leone has continued to make giant strides in all areas of human endeavour since the end of armed conflict in 2002. Since then, presidential, parliamentary and local elections — the latter ushering in a revival of local government that had been dormant for nearly 30 years — have been held in conformity with democratic principles and practice. We are now preparing for the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections to consolidate further our gains in the democratic process.

Sierra Leone believes that children are the best investment to ensure a bright future for our country. Consequently, we hold the view that development and respect for human rights start with them and that the Millennium Development Goals are a critical tool for achieving those goals. That is why we have increased the space devoted to education, as indicated by enrolment figures that have jumped from 659,503 in the 2001-2002 academic year to 1,158,399 in 2003-2004 — this in a country whose total population is 5 million.

We believe that the sound administration of justice, in particular strict adherence to the rule of law and human rights, is indispensable to attaining durable peace and political stability. Accordingly, the Government has re-established civil authority throughout Sierra Leone through the reopening and strengthening of judicial and law enforcement institutions, and we are in the process of establishing a national human rights commission.

Two transitional institutions, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which has just published its report, and the Special Court, have contributed immensely to the peace process. It is the Government's intention to implement the Commission's recommendations, to which we attach great importance as a crucial instrument of durable peace.

Let me take this opportunity to appeal to the United Nations, the international community and our friends to support the Special Court to enable it to accomplish its mandate.

There is no doubt that the United Nations and the international community have made important strides in addressing impunity. However, it is our belief that the international community should do more than support the international tribunals, truth and reconciliation commissions and other mechanisms of a transitional justice system. It is our fervent hope that the process of peace and reconciliation in Sierra Leone will not end with the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission or the end of the work of the Special Court. Reconciliation would be incomplete without addressing the special needs of the victims of the heinous crimes that were perpetrated on civilians during the armed conflict.

I solemnly appeal to the international community to assist us in supporting victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Within its limited resources, the Government has made every effort to address the special needs of the victims of the heinous crimes committed during the 11-year rebel armed conflict. But we need international support for these victims through, for instance, the Special Fund for War Victims envisaged under the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement and the National Commission for War-Affected Children.

This address would be incomplete without reference to the security situation in the West African subregion. While Sierra Leone is enjoying relative peace and stability and the capacity of its security forces continues to be enhanced by the International Military Advisory and Training Team, there is still an air of uncertainty in the neighbourhood and the

subregion. Because of the porosity of the borders and the historically fluid nature of the conflict in the subregion, we will feel safe and secure only in a conflict-free region.

In the light of this, I would like to appeal to the United Nations, the international community and our friends to continue to support measures to resolve the conflicts that have plagued the subregion for so long and diverted scarce resources and energy from development. But let me remind members about the imperative of recognizing the fact that the achievement of lasting peace requires wholesome measure for the entire subregion. In particular, we recommend a subregional approach by the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the Economic Community of West African States and other interested parties to post-conflict activities, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security-sector reform and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Finally, at the time of the debate of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, we should be reminded that the United Nations is and should remain at the centre of efforts to harmonize activities to attain its common objectives. This Organization belongs to us all and operates in the larger interest of all its members. Let this sixtieth anniversary be a time for recommitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter, a time for renewed determination to build on the successes of this great Organization.

The President: I now have the honour of giving the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mamadou Bamba, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to express my sincere congratulations on your election as President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. May I wish you and the members of the Bureau full success and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

I would like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, who during his mandate substantially contributed greatly to reviving discussion of United Nations reform and activities for development and international cooperation. I would also like to congratulate warmly the Secretary-General for his courageous initiatives to give our Organization new momentum and further the fundamental ideals and principles of the United Nations.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This session is of special importance for the Member States and the Organization itself because it takes place at a time when States are asked to speak about thorough-going reforms of the Organization in order to permit it to deal with the triple challenge of development, peace and security and the promotion and defence of human rights. The summit just held on progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was not as successful as we had hoped it would be. We can be gratified, however, that we were able, despite the difficulties, to adopt a final document reaffirming the Goals and the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development, adopted in 2002. For the first time, we were also able to condemn all acts of terrorism, regardless of motive, of who commits them and of where they are committed. My delegation hopes that we will, during this sixtieth session, be able to adopt a general, comprehensive convention on international terrorism and set up a Human Rights Council.

Efforts to achieve greater justice in international economic relations have not been as successful as we had hoped. The gap between the developed and developing countries is widening. The economies of the developing countries are deteriorating and, in some cases, their citizens are becoming pauperized on a broad scale. The countries of the third world are being thwarted in their efforts to develop, labouring under the weight of indebtedness, the volatility in commodity prices, barriers to access to the markets of developed countries, inadequate official development assistance and scarce financial resources, not to mention the conflicts and various pandemics afflicting our populations. I would like to point out that indebtedness is a form of bondage and indebted economies are economies that function under constraints. Finding a durable, innovative and daring solution to this problem is one of the prerequisites for any resumption of growth, not only in heavily indebted countries, but in most developing countries. This is why my delegation welcomes the recent decision to cancel the debt of 18 developing countries, while we deplore, as other delegations have, the limited scope of that decision. We would like it to be extended to all African countries.

The effective liberalization of international trade can generate sufficient resources for African economies and thus fund various education, health and infrastructure programmes. Unfortunately, customs and trade barriers that bear down on African exports, as well as subsidies to agriculture in the Western countries, cancel out the development efforts of the African countries that are already labouring under the burden of debt. Debt alone consumes four times more budget resources than those we need for education and health. That is why I would like to associate my country's voice with the call for justice and equity in seeking sustainable solutions to problems arising from the multilateral trade system. Here, I draw particular attention to access for our products to developed markets and the subsidies and other forms of domestic support granted by the wealthy countries to their farmers, which impair the competitiveness of our products on world markets.

The great challenges facing the world cannot be met unless we do it in the overall context of sustained solidarity. That is why Côte d'Ivoire is glad to see new initiatives put forward by Member States to mobilize additional funds or increase funds aimed at fostering development in poor countries. We congratulate the proponents of those initiatives. We would like, inter alia, to mention the allocation of special drawing rights and coordinated measures to encourage voluntary private contributions, the international financial facility presented by the British Government, which has been supported by some developed countries, and a reduction in the price of transferring funds from migrants to their countries of origin. In some States, those remittances constitute 65 per cent of all development assistance. We would also like to mention the contribution of a solidarity surcharge on air tickets in favour of sustained development, a proposal presented by Germany, Brazil, Chile and France in September 2004 that seeks to combat hunger, poverty and fund sustainable development, in particular as regards combating HIV/AIDS and other pandemics. We hope that such new sources of financing along with, and as a complement to, traditional financing resources will effectively contribute to combating poverty in the world and bring us closer to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Attaining the MDGs is a source of hope for the Côte d'Ivoire, which has for some years now been trying to emerge from the socio-political crisis that has ravaged our country. In the first national Ivorian report on the MDGs, which was issued in 2003 based on the data provided in regard to each of the eight development goals, it clearly appears that the Goals will be difficult to achieve by 2015 if the international community does not continue to provide financial support, including the cancelling of our considerable foreign debt. So, I would like to reiterate the appeal of the Government of National Reconciliation to the United Nations and to development partners, both bilateral and multilateral, to help us more in facing the new challenges of rebuilding the country, in particular, reintegrating internally displaced persons and rehabilitating our infrastructure, be they educational, health-related, cultural, or environmental.

No country can develop and protect its population from need, if it cannot take effective measures against the diseases devastating it, such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and other contagious diseases, which pose a serious threat to the entire world, particularly the poor countries, and which represent obstacles to the realization of development goals. That is why my delegation feels that the international community should intensify and coordinate its efforts aimed at providing access to generic medicines for patients in developing countries, including antiretrovirals. When the time comes, Côte d'Ivoire will fully support the world initiative to be launched in 2006 aimed at strengthening the health systems in developing countries by 2010.

As regards human rights, my delegation is gratified by efforts made by the United Nations to bring about respect for the human person and to combat impunity in Côte d'Ivoire. We particularly appreciate the visit by the High Commissioner for Human Rights last July, the visits by various commissions to investigate the situation and the visits by Special Rapporteurs. The Government is still waiting to hear the results of the latest international investigation, carried out by the United Nations from July through September 2004, covering important issues such as impunity, serious violations of human rights, international humanitarian law and mercenaries.

Trafficking in children has become an increasing problem in Africa and particularly in the countries of West Africa. West African leaders are aware that only by fighting together against this shameful trafficking will they be able to overcome it. That is why, in addition to the bilateral agreements already established

and at the initiative of Côte d'Ivoire, nine West African States, meeting on 27 July 2005 in Abidjan, adopted a multilateral cooperation agreement to combat trafficking in children in West Africa. This multilateral legal instrument contains binding obligations on all the States Parties and specific obligations for countries of origin and destination of children who are the victims of child trafficking.

As regards the resolution of conflicts on the African continent, there has been notable progress throughout the year. We are encouraged by positive developments in Sudan, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which includes, in some cases, the satisfactory holding of elections. Nevertheless, despite progress in conflict settlement, we must remain aware of the fact that the situations, generally speaking, remain fragile. The international community must therefore act more resolutely to help countries in conflict tackle the genuine causes of the conflict, while combating poverty, consolidating democratic institutions and promoting those countries' economic and social development.

While we can legitimately rejoice at the resolution of certain conflicts, we must note that, deplorably, certain situations are still far from settled. This is the case in my country, which has not yet found the road to peace, despite the many efforts made by the international community through various initiatives over the past three years, in particular the Linas-Marcoussis, Accra and Pretoria Agreements. The United Nations, through the Security Council, has invested a great deal of energy in strengthening the peace and reconciliation process in my country. We welcome all the measures taken thus far by the Security Council and are particularly encouraged by the fact that more blue helmets have been sent and that Mr. Antonio Monteiro has been appointed as the United Nations High Representative for the elections in Côte d'Ivoire.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the international community, in particular President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and other regional and subregional heads of State and organizations, for their readiness to help and for their untiring efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to the Ivorian crisis. As I stand here before you, the process is practically at a deadlock and the presidential election planned for 30 October will not be held on that date.

Holding free, fair and transparent elections within a reasonable time frame remains the main objective to be attained if we are to have sustainable peace in Côte d'Ivoire. Nevertheless, the following priority tasks must first be carried out: disarming and dismantling of militias throughout the country; the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, following an initial pre-assembly; the restoration of State administration throughout the national territory; the identification of electors and the establishment of electoral rolls — and, in that connection, the soon-to-be-operational Independent Electoral Commission is a bright note; and the provision of funds for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the electoral process.

Despite the current stagnation in the peace and reconciliation process, the Ivorian Government implores the international community not to be overcome by disappointment, discouragement or irritation. We invite it to participate more intensively and resolutely in finding solutions to the fundamental problems of the crisis, which, alone, can guarantee the return of a lasting and stable peace in my country and reconcile all our sons and daughters.

In that regard, the Security Council must remain actively seized of the case of Côte d'Ivoire, which must be kept on its agenda. In the same connection, the United Nations should, in my delegation's opinion, seriously consider imposing sanctions on all persons who are guilty of serious human rights violations, inciting hatred and violence, obstructing the peace process or violating the arms embargo throughout the country.

The Ivorian people need peace. We realize that this is primarily the responsibility of the Ivorian people themselves. Nevertheless, without the steadfast support of the international community, peace will be difficult to achieve. Therefore, I call upon our common Organization to shoulder its responsibilities and become even more involved and more active in our national peace and reconciliation process. That is its mandate and the goal of its commitment under Chapter VII of the Charter.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Allam-Mi Ahmad, Minister for Foreign Affairs and African Integration of the Republic of Chad.

Mr. Ahmad (Chad) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf I would like to extend our warm congratulations to President Eliasson on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session and to ensure him of our cooperation in carrying out his noble mission. I would also like to congratulate his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, who guided our work with tact, skill and competence throughout his term, in spite of the delicate and complex issues that were on the agenda during the fifty-ninth session.

It is clear that the results that we have reached in recent years, both in terms of peacekeeping and in our approach to development issues, have been made possible by the commendable commitment and devotion of each and every Member, at all levels of engagement and responsibility. I would specifically like to underscore the valuable contribution of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, to whom I pay a well deserved tribute.

In his report, entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (*A/59/2005*), our Secretary-General submitted specific proposals that we rightfully believe are appropriate solutions to our shared concerns. Effective implementation of those measures will enhance the effectiveness and credibility of the United Nations and will help us to meet the myriad challenges facing today's world.

A few days ago the heads of State and Government reviewed the international situation from the standpoint of the Millennium Declaration adopted in 2000 and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The conclusions clearly indicate the magnitude of the task that still remains to be accomplished, despite the efforts made by Member States and their national constituents. Those conclusions, which corroborate the analysis of the Secretary-General, tell us that times have changed and that the world — while it still bears scars from the past — has already entered into the future. Today, we are seeing the unparalleled impoverishment of many countries and peoples, as well as the emergence of new abhorrent phenomena, such as terrorism and transboundary crime, not to mention the pandemic of HIV/AIDS and the resurgence of other communicable diseases. Given those formidable developments, it is absolutely necessary to build a new international society that is more caring, more just and better managed, with the United Nations at its centre.

For its part, the Government of Chad, since the establishment of democracy in 1990, has planned and implemented a vast programme of institutional transformation that promotes social and economic development, peace and security, both domestic and external. Moreover, we held a constitutional referendum in June to amend a number of provisions — a clear demonstration of our concern to adapt our institutions to present-day demands, as well as an opportunity for our people to renew their confidence in those institutions.

While our country has achieved sufficient stability within, that is not true of our borders. We are suffering from the impacts of an insecurity that is prevalent among our neighbours, particularly in the Central African Republic and the Sudan, with which Chad shares very long borders. Therefore, prompted by our border security concerns, we have undertaken mediation initiatives to reconcile the belligerents. For those reasons, the Government of Chad took the initiative to bring together the parties to the conflict in Darfur, at Abéché, Chad, in September 2003, to make them listen to reason. Since then, the Government has worked continually and actively towards helping to reach a negotiated solution to that conflict, with support from the African Union and representatives of the international community. Moreover, in spite of his heavy schedule, President Idriss Deby has become personally involved in trying to bring about a pacific settlement to that fratricidal conflict.

Chad's mediation led to the conclusion of the N'Djamena and the Abuja agreements in Nigeria, where talks are still under way to find a comprehensive political agreement and to put an end once and for all to the crisis that has gone on for far too long. Chad will continue to act as a mediator so that one day the western region of the Sudan can at long last regain its calm and stability.

We deplore the violations of the ceasefire that are currently taking place in Darfur and hope that they will cease. We must welcome the formation of the new Government of the Sudan and we are hoping that that will be an opportunity for an acceleration of the peace process of Abuja.

In Chad, we are duty-bound to work with our brothers in the Sudan, with whom we have historical

and geographic ties. But we should not lose sight of the impacts and consequences of the conflict, which have taken a heavy toll, in particular on the border populations. For instance, Chad took a fully sovereign decision to welcome more than 200,000 Sudanese refugees and is providing many forms of support to other humanitarian institutions that are operating in the affected zone. Indeed, the disruption of trade, the deterioration of major roads by humanitarian convoys and all the other costs eat up our meagre resources and are the most common source of political unrest among our own people, who feel that they have been abandoned. Given the scarcity of our resources and the immense needs of refugees and populations in refugee areas, the Government of Chad is counting on substantial assistance from the international community.

The positive developments in the situation in the Central African Republic are facilitating the restoration of constitutional order in that brotherly country. However, the incidence of crime spilling across that country's common borders with Chad and Cameroon is increasing. That phenomenon has caused a new flow of Central African refugees into Chad and they live in very difficult conditions. We call upon the international community to devote greater attention to their plight.

We welcome the initiative taken in that regard by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, which brought together representatives of Cameroon, Chad and the Central African Republic at Yaoundé on 26 and 27 August to consider the phenomenon of insecurity on their common borders and to find solutions to it.

Of course, the insecurity on our borders should not cause us to lose sight of other crises in Africa and throughout the world. In Africa, we welcome the developments in Guinea-Bissau, Burundi and Liberia, to mention only those brotherly countries. Undoubtedly, the issue of their reconstruction will have an important place on the agendas of those countries, of the African Union and of the rest of the world.

On the other hand, the situation in Côte d'Ivoire continues to concern us. President Mbeki's mediation has not been able to lead — as had been hoped — to the immediate holding of presidential elections. We urge our Ivorian brethren to engage in dialogue.

In the Middle East, the persistence of the Israeli-Arab conflict continues to poison relations in the subregion, even while the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is a tangible element in recent developments. We are convinced that it is only through dialogue that a just and lasting solution to that conflict can be found.

With regard to the disagreement between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, we appreciate Taiwan's tireless efforts to reach a peaceful solution. The international community must encourage the two parties to accept each other. The readmission of Taiwan into the United Nations, which we believe to be a legitimate demand of that country, would be the point of departure for such acceptance.

The interdependence of the concepts of development, peace and security is the basis of our country's support for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Millennium Declaration was undoubtedly a strong signal from the partnership of rich and poor countries in favour of a fairer, more balanced and more united world. In itself, it is a great endeavour that could lead to the consolidation of global efforts.

My country has set for itself the same objectives in its development strategies, plans and programmes as are found in the Millennium Declaration, particularly our national poverty reduction strategy and our national strategy for good governance. Undoubtedly, for most of our countries, achieving the MDGs is not very likely, particularly in the areas of promoting peace and security, good governance and economic and social reforms.

There is in Chad, however, a consensus regarding the need for sustained progress on those issues and in other areas related to social, economic and political life. The Government of Chad is, therefore, focusing in particular on activities relating to the protection of children, the promotion of maternal health, the education of girls and the social and professional integration of underprivileged groups, particularly women, the elderly and the disabled. In that connection, there is no doubt that the partnership between civil society and the private sector is being strongly encouraged.

I am not unaware that many delegations may wonder about the current situation with regard to socio-economic development in Chad following the exploitation of oil there. The fact that Chad joined the small circle of oil exporting countries two years ago, although it caused some euphoria in my country, has

not attracted the expected financial resources. Unfortunately, Chad, under the agreements linking it to the oil consortium, benefits from only a small proportion of the revenues resulting from its oil. We continue to need the cooperation and assistance of friendly countries to supplement our resources, which still fall short of our needs. Such cooperation is essential if we are to carry out our development and anti-poverty programmes.

As members are aware, my country's development depends partly on the cotton crop, which unfortunately is in a state of crisis that is becoming endemic. That crop, which provides a living for much of Chad's population, is dangerously threatened by the protectionist practices of developed countries. In fact, our cotton producers are victims of the subsidy policies of countries that are supposed to comply with the rules of international trade. Measures must be taken to limit the effects of the market economy, which is increasingly restricting our weak economies. We believe that well-regulated economic trade would ensure sustainable development for the least advanced countries and would help to build confidence among States.

We are uncertain of reaching a political solution to the cotton problem, despite the hopes placed in continued multilateral trade negotiations within the framework of the Doha Round. It is no longer certain that developed countries will agree to abandon their subsidy practices and implement radical changes in the current system to meet the expectations of African cotton growers. That would leave no choice but to resort to political and legal action under the provisions of the statutes and rules of the World Trade Organization with a view to regulating the cotton market through measures to compensate the losses suffered by our producers.

Most Member States had hoped that this sixtieth session of the General Assembly would finally achieve the democratization of the United Nations. That does not yet seem to be the case. But we must not lose momentum, and we must continue to work to ensure that that objective is attained in the near future. The revitalization of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council and the transformation of the Commission on Human Rights into an important United Nations body, as suggested by the Secretary-General, would enable the Organization to be more effective. In such a restructuring, which remains relevant, the issue of Security Council expansion is of interest to Member States, particularly those of Africa — and quite rightly, because we know that since the creation of the United Nations in 1945, no African State has had a seat on the Council as a permanent member with the right of the veto. That injustice seriously mars the credibility of the United Nations, and it is time to rectify it.

Our position regarding a new configuration for the Security Council remains that which has been reaffirmed many times by the African Union. It reflects our firm will to participate in the efforts of the international community under United Nations auspices aimed at ensuring the maintenance of peace and security, which are guarantees for sustainable economic and social development.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Godfrey Smith, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Emergency Management Organization of Belize.

Mr. Smith (Belize): We congratulate the President of the General Assembly on the assumption of his office. His extensive experience in multilateral affairs will undoubtedly be an invaluable asset in our work.

The 2005 world summit has clearly demonstrated that, in five years, we have not given poverty eradication the highest priority on our international agenda.

It is clear that in too many countries the Millennium Development Goals will not be realized; in some, the situation is worse than five years ago. How then do we assure the marginalized people of our world that we are serious about achieving the Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015? The only way is by showing that there is the global political will to use the outcome document as a platform for action.

In his report "In larger freedom", Kofi Annan stressed that the priority objectives of the United Nations over the coming years should be to secure for people "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear". What is often not recognized is that a person who is not free from want can only live in fear.

The greatest evil — the most effective and consuming terrorism of our age — is the terrorism of abject poverty. It is a poverty in which millions of people live in terror because they know that sooner, not

later, they might die from hunger or from preventable diseases.

Every day in our region of Central America and the Caribbean, our people face threats to their human security: from AIDS, drug trafficking, trafficking in human persons, crushing poverty and growing inequality.

A new security approach is therefore required to contain these threats. We must promote the humanization of security rather than embark on efforts to militarize globalization. We must focus on stopping the deaths that occur every day, most often from preventable causes. Global security cannot be built on a minefield of poverty and disease.

Prioritizing human security does not mean neglecting national sovereignty or State security. As part of our national security strategy, we remain committed to fostering a culture of peace and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

In the Middle East, we are encouraged by the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. We join others in calling upon the Government of Israel to continue the withdrawal from all Palestinian territories. We look forward to the implementation of its commitments in accordance with the road map that will lead to the realization of two independent States, Palestine and Israel, coexisting side by side in peace and security.

The 23 million people on Taiwan also deserve to live in peace and security. We therefore continue to urge the United Nations to take up the plea of Taiwan to participate in this world body. Taiwan has earned its place among the community of nations.

Belize continues to be plagued by an anachronistic claim to its territory from our neighbour Guatemala. But, encouragingly, earlier this month Belize and Guatemala signed a new agreement under the auspices of .he Organization of American States. Under that agreement, if we are unable to resolve the dispute through negotiations, the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States can then recommend that we submit our differences to an international juridical body. We therefore hope that we can ensure the early and final resolution of this dispute, so that we can cooperate more effectively to combat our common problems of poverty and underdevelopment.

We all recognize that there can be no security without development. The world summit outcome document maintains the vision of development elaborated in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and other outcomes, including the Mauritius Strategy.

If we are to make measurable progress in development, we must urgently implement the global partnership for development. That global partnership involves returning development issues to the forefront of trade negotiations. Without a deeper commitment from developed countries to trade regimes that are more just, the future of the sugar and banana industries in countries such as Belize hangs in the balance. We must therefore spare no effort to ensure that the latest Doha development round concludes on terms favourable to developing countries like Belize.

As a coastal nation with a significant population in low-lying areas, my country emphasizes the need for new action to ensure environmental sustainability, particularly as it relates to climate change. We agree with the Secretary-General that:

> "One of the greatest environmental and development challenges in the twenty-first century will be that of controlling and coping with climate change." (*A/59/2005, para. 60*)

The increased temperatures occasioned by climate change are likely to lead to greater frequency of life-threatening weather systems. The most vulnerable to these changes will be small island developing States and coastal nations like Belize. It is therefore incumbent upon the international community to improve the framework for action to cope with climate change. The eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is an opportunity to forge wider and more inclusive cooperation to address that grave danger.

So much of what we hope to achieve depends on a United Nations that is effective and credible. Some recent reports point to systemic problems throughout the United Nations Organization. These, in our view, provide evidence of an Organization that is flawed — not one that is irrelevant. Belize therefore continues to view the United Nations as an indispensable Organization. It is the only global Organization that has the capacity to meaningfully foster peace, security and sustainable development for the peoples of our world.

But the United Nations must reinvent itself to meet the needs of today's geopolitics and unique global challenges. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council must be revitalized and strengthened. Similarly, the Security Council must be reformed to make it more accountable, inclusive and representative of the current membership of the United Nations.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Human Rights Council are important, but we must define ways in which these bodies can reinforce the work of the other principal organs of the United Nations.

In the five years that have elapsed since the year 2000, our collective lack of political will has resulted in the loss of millions of children, women and men to hunger, disease, HIV/AIDS and other preventable causes. But we can halt and reverse that trend. We must give a reformed United Nations, as the ultimate expression of multilateralism, the means to carry out its mandate, as set out in Article I of the Charter: "To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character".

Our world is besieged by such problems. We can carry out this mandate by implementing all the commitments we have made since the year 2000, or we can ignore them and condemn many millions more to live in misery or die in pain. The choice is ours.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Rogatien Biaou, Minister for Foreign Affairs and African Integration of Benin.

Mr. Biaou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to pay tribute to Mr. Jean Ping, who guided the work of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly with great energy. He had the tremendous responsibility of negotiating the United Nations reforms adopted by our heads of State or Government on Friday, 16 September. We commend him on his courage, his faith in the future of the United Nations and the wisdom and vision with which he discharged his functions.

The tasks facing Mr. Jan Eliasson are inspiring and crucially important. His presidency marks the beginning of the implementation phase of the major decisions taken by our heads of State or Government on reform. We are grateful to him for focusing the work of the sixtieth session on this topic.

My delegation has another good reason to be pleased at seeing Mr. Eliasson presiding over our work: the importance his country attaches to development issues and its very sizeable contribution to the efforts of the international community to eliminate poverty throughout the world. Our two countries, Benin and Sweden, successfully co-chaired the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Development. All of this bodes well for this session.

The eradication of poverty tops the priority list of the Benin Government. In this context, we negotiated and adopted, with the Bretton Woods institutions, a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Its effective implementation, jointly with our Government's plan of action and our national studies on long-term prospects, entitled "Benin 2005: ALAFIA", should set into motion progress that will bring about the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. However, it will still be necessary for the efforts carried out with our bilateral and multilateral development partners to converge to improve the situation in the seven critical areas for making aid to least developed countries effective. These are: substantially reducing the external debt burden of least developed countries so they can devote greater domestic resources to eliminating poverty; strengthening institutional capacity to attract foreign direct investment and develop free enterprise; diversifying the destinations of foreign direct investment; promoting public sector/private sector partnership in least developed countries to promote rural development; strengthening the impact of remittances from our diaspora; the promotion of South-South investment to improve the availability of products on markets; and, strengthening the potential of microcredit to eliminate poverty.

We are gratified at the decision taken in Gleneagles, Scotland, by the Group of Eight (G-8) to completely cancel the debt of 18 highly indebted poor countries, 13 of which are least developed countries. We urgently appeal to donor countries to seriously consider the possibility of extending the benefit of this new positive measure to all least developed countries.

The Coordinating Bureau of the Least Developed Countries, which my country has had the honour of chairing since 2002, will continue consulting with

international financial institutions and development partners in close cooperation with the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to bring about meaningful progress in all these areas. This is the context of the ministerial conference of the least developed countries on remittances from migrant workers. The conference will be held in Cotonou, Benin, in February 2006, not in October 2005 as originally planned. In the context of this conference, the 50 least developed countries are planning to set up an international monitoring body for funds transfers by migrant workers; it will be open to all States. We urge all United Nations Member States to support this initiative, which is intended to strengthen the impact of these transferred resources on the development of recipient countries.

In addition to these considerations that directly affect the least developed countries, there is an urgent need to promote and give appropriate weight to the development agenda within the context of multilateral trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization and to translate into deeds the firm commitments by the countries concerned on the elimination of agricultural subsidies, in particular those for cotton, to which my country attaches particular importance. Such a measure would remove a considerable handicap on developing countries' efforts to fully take advantage of their comparative advantages in order to become fully integrated into the world economy. We reaffirm that it is indispensable that access to world markets be coupled with measures to strengthen the supply of products from developing countries through adequate support for the local processing of commodities.

No initiative, no measure, no activity and no decision in the field of development can be successful without peace. It is of particular concern that, on essential matters such as disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the United Nations cannot forge the required consensus to secure the long-term survival of our planet in view of the potential for self-destruction that has built up. These questions should be considered calmly, with the higher interests of humankind in mind, setting aside the particular interest of any country in pursuing some hypothetical power that would reduce security for each and every one of us.

Benin has no objection to the peaceful use of nuclear power to serve the energy needs of the planet, but it feels that any effort to divert peaceful programmes to military programmes runs counter to a vision of collective security based on promoting disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Our heads of State or Government decided to confirm the Security Council's key role as the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We urge all members of the Assembly to commit themselves to ensuring that the Security Council is expanded to make it more representative and better able to counter old and new threats to international peace and security.

In the 60 years of existence of the United Nations, the Security Council has with varying degrees of success, worked to manage and settle armed conflicts. It has been able to respond to breaches of international peace and security, but it has not always been able to take action to stop or reverse events that have led to an explosion of violence or armed conflict. Given the loss of human life and the massive destruction of property as a result of current threats, it is high time for the Security Council to attach higher priority to conflict prevention, in the spirit of Article 34 of the Charter, which states that

> "The Security Council may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security".

If we look at the spirit and the letter of this provision, the Security Council is definitely competent to analyse and monitor situations involving the risk of conflict or a breach of the peace anywhere in the world and to become actively involved in managing crises before conflict breaks out or threats materialize. It is in that light that we must view Security Council resolution 1625 (2005), adopted at the 14 September 2005 Council summit at the initiative of the three African members of the Security Council, led by my country, Benin.

In the context of Security Council reform, the General Assembly should consider the subject of a proactive approach and reflect on how to structure support mechanisms in order to enable the Council to effectively play its role in the prevention of conflicts and of threats to international peace and security.

Peace remains an invaluable and incalculable good. We share the concerns expressed recently by the Secretary-General at the launch of his Alliance of Civilizations initiative. That constructive initiative should be made part of the framework of activities to counter threats to our world, including terrorism, whose predominant religious ties lend credence to theories of a clash of civilizations leading to certain chaos. Benin supports the Alliance of Civilizations initiative, which aims to restore peace in our hearts and among religions so that weapons will fall silent and our peoples will be able to express their aspirations for peace.

We join the quest for peace of those peoples who lack peace today. We express our solidarity with peoples suffering armed conflicts in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and Europe. The Organization must redouble its efforts to help them procure national concord, understanding and cohesion.

In that context, we are pursuing a thoroughgoing campaign against the recruitment and the use of children in armed conflicts. Now that the Security Council has adopted its resolution 1612 (2005), the General Assembly, for its part, should establish an open-ended working group to consider proposals for actions to redefine that scourge as a crime against humanity instead of a war crime. We are counting on everyone's support to make that initiative a reality.

In the Middle East, the withdrawal of the occupying Power from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank brings us closer, fortunately, to our common vision of an independent State of Palestine living side by side with the State of Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders. We believe that the Quartet's road map can lead the Israeli and Palestinian peoples to that goal. We call upon their leaders to remain committed to the route of peace.

We ask the same of Iraqi leaders and urge them to spare no effort to ensure that all Iraqi communities participate in the transition process leading to the restoration of peace and the strengthening of the country's unity. We make the same appeal to Afghanistan, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, among others.

In the same spirit of dialogue, we welcome the significant progress made in resolving the conflicts of West Africa through the cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States aimed at promoting dynamic peacebuilding processes for the gradual return of normality in the countries affected by conflict and for preventing the spread of conflict, through an integrated, regional approach.

We invite all Ivorian parties to overcome their differences of view and give peace and stability a chance in the West African subregion. The holding of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the remarkable success achieved by the transition processes in the Central African Republic and Burundi have restored the prospects of the entire region. We encourage the countries concerned to reach a regional agreement for peace, security, good governance and development in the framework of the second regional summit, to be held in Nairobi, and to scrupulously implement that agreement in order to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

Those regional initiatives require enhanced assistance from the international community if the transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is to be a success. In that context, Benin intends to pursue its policy of active participation in peacekeeping operations. Our country stands ready to increase its contribution to the international community's efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to support the democratic transition process under way.

In East Africa, the United Nations and the African Union have formed an unprecedented partnership to restore peace in the Sudan and put an end to the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, in the spirit of Chapter VIII of the Charter. Such a partnership is essential also in Somalia. In that context, it is in the interest of the United Nations to assist the African Union in establishing and organizing its peacekeeping capacities, in particular by strengthening the structures for planning and for training national and subregional contingents of the African standby force.

Another essential element to which we attach great importance, and which we hope to see realized promptly, relates to the decision taken by our heads of State or Government on the establishment of a standing police force. The establishment of such a force should take into consideration the need for linguistic balance in accordance with short-term and medium-term deployment needs. The modalities of the force's composition should be defined promptly. To that end, we propose carrying out a rapid evaluation of present worldwide human resources and of Member States'

capacity to train police officers. A rational process in that area would consist of taking best advantage of those capacities and giving all Member States an equal opportunity for participation in the new force.

Beyond peacemaking action, the need to help countries emerging from armed conflict remain on the path of peace and overcome the risk of relapse constitutes a real challenge to which we have adequately responded through our reflections on the role of the United Nations. That is the reason behind the Peacebuilding Commission. The consensus on this question does honour to the Organization. The Commission must become operational as soon as possible to strengthen action to assist countries that have undertaken particularly difficult democratic transitions, such as Burundi, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau, if their Governments request such assistance.

Countries facing an ongoing state of social emergency can improve their chances for lasting stability only if the international community mobilizes the necessary resources to help restore a minimum of normality by ensuring that those States can exercise their sovereign rights in the areas of security and the provision of essential social services such as health care, child education, transport and access to financial resources.

The success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in all their aspects is decisive for making a peace process irreversible and for guarding against the risk of the spread of conflict caused by the dispersion of former combatants that have not successfully reintegrated into productive civil society. The international community must ensure that the reintegration component of those programmes also receives adequate financing.

In the same context, the Human Rights Council must take its place in the machinery of the United Nations. Its mandate, size, structure and operational procedures must take into account the requirements of representativity, credibility and effectiveness by drawing all lessons from the experience and the practices of the Commission on Human Rights, which it is intended to replace. In that regard, the new Council must become the preferred instrument for identifying cases in which the international community should exercise its responsibility to protect populations. In that regard, the Human Rights Council also has a crucial role to play as an early-warning structure within the United Nations system and as a key element of its conflict-prevention machinery.

We cannot conclude without underlining our full support for the excellent idea of the Government of Sweden to create a network of heads of State and other world leaders to monitor effective implementation of United Nations reform.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Rita Kieber-Beck, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Mrs. Kieber-Beck (Liechtenstein): One week ago, the world summit sent a message of hope for peace, development and human rights for all, and took a number of steps towards institutional reform at the United Nations. The summit meeting has achieved much. It has also left a lot undone and has not met our expectations in several areas. We agree with the General Assembly President's assessment that only the work we do over the next few months will allow us a final assessment of the value of the outcome document.

The summit certainly did not achieve the comprehensive breakthrough we had hoped for. We therefore look forward to working under the President's guidance on the follow-up and implementation and welcome the fact that he has started this process immediately. Institutional change must be the focus of our attention over the next few months, both through the creation of new bodies and the adaptation of existing ones. We will give particular attention to the Human Rights Council, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretariat.

We shared the general relief at the last-minute agreement on the outcome document, since a lack of such agreement would have been disastrous. We had created expectations that were much higher than what we could have possibly achieved, at a time when the United Nations seemed more in need of reform than ever before. The reputation and the worldwide image of the United Nations is clearly not what it used to be — the oil-for-food scandal, cases of sexual exploitation by United Nations peacekeepers, inaction in the face of mass crimes and humanitarian crises have overshadowed the many success stories that this Organization has to tell.

It is important to move on from the oil-for-food scandal. Moving on, however, must not mean that we ignore, yet again, the fact that the massive abuse and mismanagement revealed in the Volcker reports are but one expression of what is a systemic problem. Too much went wrong in the oil-for-food programme, and everybody involved failed in their responsibilities in one way or another, including the Security Council. No bureaucracy can be changed overnight, as we all know from our national experience; but it is clear that only a more accountable Secretariat, one that works without undue pressure from us, the Member States, can restore the confidence of the peoples it is meant to serve.

Accountability must also be a key principle for the intergovernmental bodies and thus guide us in our work on the relevant reforms. We are concerned at the increasingly skewed institutional balance within the Organization. The Security Council has clearly taken on a role that goes far beyond the central place it was given under the Charter. Indeed, its activities are increasingly venturing into the domains reserved for the General Assembly, in particular.

This entails a twofold risk. On the one hand, many countries increasingly feel a lack of ownership of the Organization, although collective ownership based on the principle of sovereign equality is one of the cornerstones of the Organization. On the other hand, the Security Council is at risk of being paralysed by the sheer amount of issues on its agenda. The answer to this challenge is clear: we need a stronger General Assembly that asserts its central role and carries out its functions effectively. In parallel, the Security Council must become more transparent and accountable in order to truly carry out its functions on behalf of the entire membership.

The lack of a solution to the complex issue of Security Council reform is a disappointment to many. Enlargement and a more representative Council are clear necessities, and we will do our part to achieve an early solution, with the strongest possible political support. In addition, and not less importantly, we must also improve the working methods of the Security Council, as stated in the World Summit Outcome (*resolution 60/1*). Transparency, accountability and stronger involvement of States that are not members of the Council are of decisive importance to enable it to truly act on behalf of the membership, as mandated by the Charter. We will work hard for early and concrete results, since effective changes in the daily workings of the Council would benefit the entire membership.

We routinely repeat our annual call for a stronger General Assembly. Small steps are taken every year, and all of them are important. It appears to us, however, that the most essential efforts to revitalize the General Assembly do not come from measures contained in General Assembly resolutions. Rather, Member States must ensure that the Assembly is seized with truly relevant topics that are treated efficiently and effectively. We may deplore the migration of topics to the Security Council that we think should be dealt with instead by the General Assembly. This trend, however, will continue unabated unless the Assembly proves to be a central decision-making body that takes its responsibilities seriously. The Assembly is what we, as Member States, want it to be. A genuine and sustained effort is, therefore, required from all of us.

We continue to fully support the early establishment of a Human Rights Council to replace the Commission on Human Rights. Like others, we were disappointed at the meagre substance on this topic that found its way into the outcome document. The Organization needs a standing body that effectively promotes human rights worldwide, swiftly responds to gross and systematic violations of human rights and reflects the importance of human rights for this Organization. Close cooperation with a strengthened Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will be essential. The Council must not duplicate the work carried out by other bodies, in particular the General Assembly. It must, therefore, not be a remake of the Commission on Human Rights with a new label. We look forward to working with the presidency towards an early solution that would add concrete value for the protection and promotion of human rights.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We consider the recognition of the "responsibility to protect" as one of the most positive elements in the outcome document. The main obligation for its implementation naturally falls to the Security Council. The Council has to ensure that disgraceful inaction, such as in the case of the genocide in Rwanda, cannot ever occur again. When the lives of innocent civilians are at stake, such a responsibility must not be compromised by political considerations. Collective

action to prevent and respond to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes must, therefore, not be made impossible by a veto or threat of veto by one of the permanent members of the Council. We hope that the Council will stand up to the challenge raised by the summit. The membership as a whole clearly has a shared obligation in this respect.

Our achievement in the Summit Outcome on the "responsibility to protect" stands in stark contrast to our silence on the importance of fighting impunity for the worst crimes of international concern. More progress has been made in this area in the past few years than in almost any other area of international relations. Transitional justice is now an inevitable element of any serious effort to help societies in post-conflict situations. There is now a close and well-established relationship between the International Criminal Court and the United Nations, in particular after the Security Council decision to mandate the Court to investigate the crimes in Darfur. We trust that efforts to fight impunity will remain a high priority for the Organization, recognizing the central role of the International Criminal Court in that respect.

While it may be premature to pronounce a final judgement on the value of the outcome document, one thing can be said with certainty: that document is a reflection of what is agreeable five years after the Millennium Summit. It is remarkable how uneven progress has been in several areas. Major advances, such as the decision to fill an institutional void by creating a Peacebuilding Commission, are accompanied by major failures, such as the absence of any agreement in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. We have no choice but to build on the positive elements of the Summit Outcome and to find early solutions to institutional questions, in particular. Progress in those areas should help us to intensify our work and eventually to find agreement on unresolved questions in vital areas such as disarmament and non-proliferation. In this way, we can make the summit a turning point in the history of the United Nations.

Two years ago, the Secretary-General said that we had reached a fork in the road; that observation was repeated many times during the process leading up to the summit. So where are we today? Looking back at what we have achieved, it seems that we have taken the advice of Yogi Berra, one of the great legends of the City of New York, who said: "When you come to a fork in the road, take it!"

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Mr. Wangchuk (Bhutan): Allow me to begin by extending my delegation's warmest congratulations to the President upon his assumption of the office of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. We have full confidence in his ability to guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion. I also pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, for skilfully conducting the work of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly and for his efforts in preparing the High-level Plenary Meeting, held from 14 to 16 September 2005.

It is appropriate that the theme for the sixtieth session of the General Assembly is "For a stronger and more effective United Nations: the follow-up and implementation of the High-level Plenary Meeting in September 2005".

Indeed, this session has the responsibility to implement the decisions of the High-level Plenary Meeting. Our leaders have clearly pronounced that the goals and objectives of the Millennium Summit and other United Nations conferences and summits represent the minimum required to deal with the issues and challenges of our time. Their message is that 2005 should be a year for concrete action to deliver on those goals and objectives. We must, therefore, summon political will and assume moral responsibility to work truly for the benefit of our peoples on whose behalf we gather at the United Nations year after year.

In the report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (*A/59/2005*), the Secretary-General argues that the principles and purposes of the United Nations contained in the Charter remain as valid and relevant today as they were in 1945 and that what is now required is for practice and organization to move with the times. My delegation fully agrees with that view. Our work must always be guided by the Charter, but our approach must adapt to changing circumstances and challenges. In doing so, we must move beyond narrow national perspectives and interests and treat all issues in a balanced and holistic manner.

As I stated at the High-level Plenary Meeting last week, my delegation supports all initiatives to strengthen the United Nations and its institutions. Of

significant interest to my delegation is the strengthening of this Assembly, which is the only universal body in the United Nations. There is a clear consensus within the membership on the need for urgent and wide-ranging reform of the United Nations, although differences remain on the nature and extent of reform. The 2005 World Summit Outcome has entrusted the sixtieth session with implementation of certain reform decisions and at the same time with carrying out further discussions and negotiations in areas where consensus has not been reached. We must continue with our efforts to find consensus in those areas.

Among the issues that are unresolved is the reform of the Security Council. We have debated this issue for well over a decade, but have not yet reached a decision. My country continues to call for early action to enlarge the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council and to improve its working methods. In this context, we reiterate our support to include Brazil, Germany, India and Japan as permanent members. Those countries have demonstrated their capacity and will to contribute to world peace and security. We also believe that Africa should be adequately represented by permanent membership on the Council.

Development is the most immediate and pressing issue for the vast majority of Member States. No other issue can be as central as development when millions live in deprivation and despair; and global peace and security cannot be truly achieved without advancing development. In fact, partnership in other areas cannot be sustained without genuine international cooperation in development.

The shortfalls in our commitments to the Millennium Summit and other major United Nations conferences and summits are all too clear. More needs to be done urgently to address the hurdles of development, which range from finance to debt, trade, global governance and systemic issues, the environment and science and technology.

Adequate and predictable sources of financing are crucial for the success of development efforts. We therefore welcome ideas for innovative sources of funding and calls for increased official development assistance (ODA). In this regard, my delegation would like to commend those countries that have achieved or exceeded the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP). We welcome the timetable established by some countries to achieve the ODA target by 2015 and urge others to do so expeditiously. We also urge that 0.2 per cent of GNP be allocated to least developed countries to enable them to achieve the goals and objectives of the Brussels Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The recent decision of the Group of 8 (G-8) to cancel the external debt of 18 highly indebted poor countries, including 13 least developed countries, is a welcome move. My delegation is hopeful that the same consideration will be given to all least developed countries.

As a small, least developed and landlocked country, Bhutan sees official development assistance as its primary source of financing for development. In this regard, my delegation would like to place on record its deep appreciation of the bilateral and multilateral partners that are actively supporting our development efforts. Despite a significant increase in its own resources, my country will have to rely on ODA for some time in its efforts to realize the MDGs as well as for overall development.

The continued support of the international community for our development efforts is crucial at the present juncture. Decades of gradual but deliberate change in the system of governance of the country, spearheaded by His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, are entering a critical phase. A draft constitution for the country is currently under discussion. Its adoption in the near future will transform the country into a parliamentary democracy. For this system of governance to succeed, it is imperative that the country be able to maintain the current level of progress in the social, economic and other fields.

My country attaches great importance to the conservation and protection of the environment, as human life is fundamentally dependent on natural systems and resources. There cannot be sustainable development without environmental sustainability. We must commit ourselves to meeting the goals of, inter alia, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Agenda 21 and the Kyoto Protocol. In Bhutan, we have made serious efforts to integrate the principles and practices of environmental sustainability into our development policies and programmes. As a result of our conservation efforts, Bhutan has successfully maintained 72.5 per cent of its land area under forest

cover. Our modest achievement in this area was duly recognized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in April 2005 when it awarded to His Majesty the King and the people of Bhutan a UNEP Champions of the Earth 2005 award.

My country fully supports the establishment of a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards. Situated in a very fragile mountain ecosystem, Bhutan is prone to glacial floods and other natural disasters, including earthquakes. The solidarity that the international community demonstrated last year when many countries in the Indian Ocean rim were devastated by the tsunami was exemplary and is worth replicating in other areas.

Terrorism is a pernicious threat to peace and security. It cannot be justified under any circumstances. It is imperative for the international community to act resolutely to root out this menace. We condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Bhutan supports all efforts to conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism and other initiatives. Small and poor developing countries are particularly vulnerable and are in need of international support to fight terrorism. They are also vulnerable to transnational crime and need assistance to deal with it.

International migration is on the increase today. Migration offers opportunities and at the same time presents serious challenges to both source and recipient countries. Associated with it is the problem of illegal immigration, which presents serious challenges, particularly to small countries such as my own. It is therefore important for a high-level dialogue on international migration and development to be held by the General Assembly in 2006 to address all issues associated with migration.

My delegation supports the Secretary-General's continuing efforts to organize annual multilateral treaty events in conjunction with General Assembly sessions. In this context, we are pleased to report to the Assembly that Bhutan acceded to the following treaties last week: the United Nations Convention against Corruption; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict; and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Bhutan, as a responsible Member State, fully upholds all relevant international treaties and conventions. However, our desire to accede to them is consistently constrained by lack of capacity to deal with the range of issues they contain and by the difficulties of meeting reporting and other obligations. This is a serious hurdle faced by many small countries, especially least developed countries. There is a genuine need to look at ways to simplify reporting and other obligations and to provide technical and financial assistance to countries in need.

We must heed the call of the Secretary-General who has said,

> "Our action must be as urgent as the need, and on the same scale. ... Only by acting decisively now can we both confront the pressing security challenges and win a decisive victory in the global battle against poverty by 2015". (*A/59/2005, para. 23*)

We believe that the time to act is now. We must not let the opportunity slip. I wish the General Assembly continued success at this session.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Rosemary Banks, chairperson of the delegation of New Zealand.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): Sixty years ago, Prime Minister Peter Fraser of New Zealand told representatives to the San Francisco Conference that its sole aim should be

> "the setting up of a world organization that will really work, and that will be the background for an orderly progress towards security, prosperity and happiness for all the people of all nations".

The new organization would only work, he said, if its members were determined to stand by their commitments and principles.

Today the essential concept of the United Nations remains robust. We can be justly proud of its achievements in many areas including humanitarian assistance, development and peacekeeping. But we have collectively underperformed in others, sometimes with tragic results.

Our task this sixtieth anniversary is twofold: first, to recommit ourselves as Member States to the enduring vision and values of the Charter and,

secondly, to retool the United Nations machinery to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Summit Outcome (*resolution 60/1*) provides the blueprint for the way forward. New Zealand would have liked more progress in a number of areas, such as more detailed agreement on the establishment of the Human Rights Council and more authority to the Secretary-General to manage resources in return for greater accountability. We deeply regret the failure to endorse further disarmament and non-proliferation measures.

But we are encouraged by the many significant advances, including recognition of the need for more and better aid, establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, a doubling of resources for the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and the recognition of our shared "responsibility to protect".

We have as our theme for the General Assembly implementation of our summit undertakings. We share accountability for getting the job done. I shall confine my comments here to the results of the summit.

New Zealand is pleased with the Summit Outcome as it relates to development. It represents a shared commitment by all Member States to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and recognizes the important partnership between developed and developing countries in the effective use of aid.

This year New Zealand has increased its development assistance by 23 per cent. Our official development assistance (ODA) programme has a focus on poverty elimination, with a core, but not exclusive, focus on the Pacific. We strive to address aid effectiveness, the particular problems faced by small island developing States, HIV/AIDS, the empowerment of women, sexual and reproductive health and rights, education for all, sustainable development and trade access.

On trade, we look forward to an ambitious outcome across all aspects of the Doha Development Agenda, including in agriculture, improved market access, the elimination of export subsidies and substantial reductions in trade distorting domestic support. Improving the coherence of trade policies and development initiatives remains a critical element in achieving the MDGs.

New Zealand welcomes the decision to establish a Peacebuilding Commission to help break the cycle of conflict by better coordinating long-term international recovery efforts and ensuring sustained political attention to those who need it. We must now move swiftly to get the Commission up and running by December this year. We look to the General Assembly President to take a lead in holding consultations to achieve this. The core elements of the framework have already been discussed at length and in detail. With good will and determination, we can surely arrive at agreement within the next few weeks on a package. This should ensure balanced membership and flexible reporting arrangements. We would caution against raising the bar for assistance too high, and we hope that all States in need of help will be able to approach the Commission.

Our leaders have spoken with one voice and unequivocally to condemn all forms of terrorism. We must build on this and honour our undertaking to conclude negotiations on the comprehensive convention on international terrorism at this session. New Zealand will continue to work closely with our friends in the Pacific region to improve our collective abilities to identify, prevent or respond to terrorist threats. Consolidating reporting requirements created by Security Council resolutions would, we believe, be one step towards enhancing the counter-terrorism programme of the United Nations. We think it very important that Member States should now support the Secretary-General's counter-terrorism strategy.

One of the most far-reaching achievements of the summit, as many countries have acknowledged, is our collective acceptance that there is a responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We must now all be prepared to assist the United Nations in establishing the early warning capability referred to in our outcome document. It is vital that, when the need arises, we give effect to our resolve and follow the principles we have agreed upon.

In this context, New Zealand wishes to reaffirm its commitment to ending impunity for those responsible for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. Adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was an historic moment for the United Nations and one that demonstrated the breadth and depth of political will to end impunity and to secure the rule of law.

The absence of any reference to a commitment to end impunity or of any acknowledgement of the International Criminal Court's central contribution to this goal is one of several telling silences in our summit outcome.

We are particularly pleased that leaders have recognized the need to conclude, during this session, negotiations on the draft protocol to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. This will be a major priority for New Zealand. We call on all Member States to contribute constructively to this process, so that we can reach agreement on a protocol and demonstrate our full support for the work of United Nations personnel in the field.

New Zealand welcomes the emphasis on human rights in the outcome document. That the budget of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is to be doubled and her Office strengthened is an overdue recognition of the gap between expectations of delivery and resourcing.

While progress has been made through the summit decision to establish a Human Rights Council, we regret that the opportunity was lost to reach agreement on details of the Council's mandate and operation, despite the support of a great majority of Members for such a package. A small minority cannot be allowed to veto the establishment of the Council.

Over the next weeks we must redouble our efforts to translate that broad support into specifics on what the Council will look like and on its mandate. We shall look to the President to set a work programme that will aim for agreement on the details.

Our second human rights priority for the sixtieth session is to see negotiations completed on the draft convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. The constructive and collegial spirit of delegations in the Ad Hoc Committee on the rights of persons with disabilities has been extraordinary. New Zealand is confident that it will be possible to conclude the negotiations in 2006 if the Ad Hoc Committee is enabled to meet for three weeks next January.

Our ability to strengthen the United Nations across the board in development, security and human rights will be enhanced by implementing summit undertakings on Secretariat and management reform. We need particularly to improve the managerial effectiveness and accountability of the Secretary-General. He should be given, as he has requested, the tools that he needs to manage the Secretariat.

We strongly support the review of all budgetary and human resource rules and regulations and the review of mandates. We support also the increased focus on ensuring ethical conduct on the part of all United Nations personnel. We believe a system-wide code of ethics and an independent ethics office would facilitate that. New Zealand also welcomes the commitment to strengthening the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services.

The outcome document calls for early reform of the Security Council, and the General Assembly is to review progress on this issue by the end of the year. New Zealand continues to believe that the Security Council needs to be more effective and more representative for the twenty-first century, although we have no illusions about the difficulties of reaching agreement on this.

We should in the meantime renew our efforts to improve the working methods of the Security Council. For those many Member States who rarely, if ever, occupy a non-permanent seat on the Council, there should be other ways to participate in Council decisions and contribute to discussions.

We, as Member States, have shown in finalizing the summit outcome a mixture of courage and creativity on the one hand and of stubbornness and hesitation on the other. The implementation period ahead gives us a second chance to make good on those moments when we allowed agreements to slip through our fingers. We put our trust in our President to set up the structures for ongoing work and to be the catalyst to motivate and energize us.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the much valued contribution that former President Ping made over the last year, and we thank him.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Lorin Robert, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr. Robert (Federated States of Micronesia): I take this opportunity to congratulate President Eliasson on his election to lead our deliberations during this very important session of the General Assembly. I would also like to pay tribute to our outgoing President of the fifty-ninth session, His Excellency Mr. Jean

Ping, and our Secretary-General for their tireless efforts and very considerable contributions to the successful outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting that concluded just a week ago.

This year, at this historic session, we commemorate a milestone in the rich history of the Organization as we celebrate its sixtieth anniversary. For us in Micronesia, the occasion also marks the fifteenth anniversary of our joining the United Nations. We are proud and motivated to be part of this great Organization.

Our celebrations, however, should have a noble purpose beyond honouring the past and the present. This occasion should give focus to the long road ahead of us. Inspired by the accomplishments of the past 60 years, we must forge ahead with strong determination, confidence and vigour to meet the challenges that the future holds for the Organization.

The Federated States of Micronesia does not pretend to believe that the problems that we are called upon to tackle are easy; they are not. But while we have differences of opinion as to how they may be effectively addressed, my delegation is encouraged by the broad consensus that was reached during the high-level panel meetings last week that the reform of the United Nations and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) must be addressed one way or another and sooner rather than later. No doubt the consensus was forged in the conviction that the United Nations, with all its shortcomings, still represents the best hope for humankind to solve its problems at the multilateral level. If that is the case, as my country firmly believes it is, the Organization must be reformed to reflect present day realities and to effectively and efficiently achieve its enduring objectives as enshrined in the Charter. For the sake of our Organization's credibility, for its long-term sustainability, and for the millions of people around the globe that pin their hopes on the United Nations, the Organization must be reformed. My delegation fully supports the call that has been made within the General Assembly Hall for its comprehensive reform.

Consequently, let us give full consideration to the reform of the Security Council. The challenges of the twenty-first century demand that we should do so. With the indulgence of members, I do not wish to go into details here, as the position of my Government on the issue has already been made known on several occasions. I would only reiterate our call for the inclusion of Japan and Germany, among the developed countries, as permanent members of the Council, because we believe they will contribute greatly to the maintenance of peace and security. For those aforementioned reasons, we also support the inclusion of India, a developing country, as a permanent member of the Security Council. Moreover, we will support the inclusion of other developing countries from other regions, if that reflects the choice of those regions. We urge Member States to take bold and decisive action on this issue.

The time has come for the "enemy State" clauses in the United Nations Charter to be removed. They have long become obsolete. The outcome document rightfully reflects that fact.

The sixtieth General Assembly could not have been more timely. It can take up the noble but incomplete task of reinforcing and facilitating the full implementation of the outcome of last week's summit. We have little choice but to complete that which was left unfinished.

Consistent with the broader agenda of the debates, we wish to reiterate the great importance that we attach to the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to be held in Tunisia in November. For my country, whose population is dispersed on many islands scattered over a vast area of the Pacific, access to affordable and reliable information and communication technologies (ICTs) is critical to the socio-economic advancement of its people. But harnessing the power of ICTs does not benefit only a few. In the end, it is a win-win proposition for us all — for developing and developed countries alike. The responsible use and effective dissemination of meaningful information is the key to emancipation from human ignorance and is therefore essential to socio-economic progress. It follows that the means of collecting, evaluating, and transmitting information must be shared and placed at the service of humankind. It is for that reason that my country continues to add its voice to those of other countries in urging universal cooperation in the WSIS process. It is a step forward along the road to achieving the MDGs. Without it, the MDGs will mean little.

It is for the same reason that my Government supports the Community of Democracies and participates in its activities. In our view,

democratization of the institutions of governance and transparency in public policymaking — with due regard to local conditions — are inseparable from economic progress and collective security. After all, the work of the Community does not contradict but further reinforces the MDGs and, in a larger sense, the time-honoured objectives incorporated in the Charter of the United Nations.

It does not take a great deal of wisdom to realize that, as a small island developing State, my country is vulnerable to the extremely adverse impact of global climate change. For the 15 years we have been a Member of the United Nations, we have been vocal here and elsewhere on the issue of climate change and its adverse impact on small island developing States. For us, it is an issue of security and survival. I reiterate our appeal to those countries that have not yet ratified the Kyoto Protocol to do so immediately and without further delay.

A week ago during the High-level Plenary Meeting, President Joseph Urusemal, like other Micronesian Presidents before him, called attention to the daunting challenges facing our country and other small island developing States in pursuing sustainable development and achieving the MDGs. I reaffirm their calls here once again, and stress the urgent need for the international community to fully and effectively implement the Mauritius Strategy for the further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The Strategy provides a way forward for these countries and plays a crucial role in our ability to achieve sustainable development and meet the MDGs.

As if the plethora of challenges I have spoken of are not daunting enough for my country, the escalating cost of fuel and its negative impact on our efforts to meet development goals and pursue sustainable development is a major cause of concern. That crisis brings to the fore the need identified by small island developing States for accelerated research and development and a sharing of technologies in the areas of renewable and alternative sources of energy. We appeal to the international community to assist us in those areas.

I take this opportunity today to reiterate the call made by my President during the High-level Plenary Meeting to further strengthen cooperation and linkages between the United Nations and countries of the Pacific, like mine. The need for the physical presence of the United Nations system and its sustained engagement in our development process is now more compelling than ever. We cannot accept the notion that our country is undeserving of the substantive presence of the United Nations.

Over the past few months we have seen encouraging signs in the Middle East. The historic disengagement of Israel from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank is a step in the right direction and should be commended. My Government appreciates the political obstacles faced by the two parties and encourages them to stay the course towards a peaceful settlement of what has been a long, complex and unpleasant experience. We call upon both parties to spare no effort to actively pursue peaceful negotiations. They should not be satisfied until the day comes when Israeli and Palestinian children can play side by side and live in peace, without fear.

As a young country that graduated from the trusteeship regime of this Organization, my country places high hopes in the United Nations. At 60, the United Nations should not to be contemplating retirement. Instead, the time has come for this great Organization to strengthen and rededicate itself in order to effectively and efficiently meet the challenges of the new millennium.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Phesheya Mbongeni Dlamini, chairman of the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): It is an honour and privilege for me to present my country's statement, as commanded by His Majesty King Mswati III.

I am happy to convey the greetings and best wishes of His Majesty King Mswati III, Her Majesty the Queen Mother, and the entire Swazi nation.

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to congratulate Mr. Eliasson on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. The Kingdom of Swaziland is confident that his diplomatic skills and vast experience in international affairs will guide the work of the General Assembly to a successful conclusion as it faces the daunting task of reform and change.

We wish also to recognize the work done by his predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, Minister of Foreign Affairs

of Gabon, who ably steered the last session so as to set the stage for change in the year 2005. He hands over the leadership of this body at a crucial time — a time when we have to take concrete and firm action to effect such change. We wish him well and every success in his future endeavours.

This is a momentous occasion, as we are celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations at a time when we are charting a course and adopting clear guidelines for adapting the Organization to the effective role it must play in the new century. We have also taken on the responsibility and challenge of ensuring that the United Nations of the twenty-first century can make real improvements in the lives of the peoples of the world.

Given the contributions of the United Nations to world peace, economic and social development and the observance of human rights, we are reaffirming our faith in the Organization, and we will continue to work to achieve the objectives of the Charter through the strengthening and revitalization of the United Nations system.

In the last five years, the international community has witnessed a mixed bag of successes, trials and tribulations whose consequences have been felt across the globe. The scale of some of these man-made problems and natural disasters — such as terrorism, war, the tsunami and Hurricane Katrina — was unprecedented.

It is because of some of these incidents that, for the first time in its existence, the United Nations has been challenged in its pivotal role of maintaining global peace, security and safety. Fortunately, the United Nations has remained undeterred, and that is due in particular to the astute leadership of our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose diplomatic skills and efforts to unite — tested as they have been — have managed to keep the Organization focused as it deals with the critical issues confronting the international community today.

For those reasons, the Kingdom of Swaziland believes that this session presents an opportunity for us to advance further the reform process in order not only to make the Organization efficient and effective, but also to ensure that the programmes of action adopted at past global conferences are fully implemented.

We therefore welcome the decisions taken at the recently concluded Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) review summit. These will indeed set us on course to have a significant impact on each and every country's socio-political and economic development.

Our quest for a safer and secure world continues to be challenged. The recent spate of terrorist bombings in various parts of the world is a clear indication that we have to fight that growing scourge with urgency. The adoption of the 13 conventions covering different aspects of terrorism demonstrates our unwavering commitment to this course.

The Kingdom of Swaziland supports the Secretary-General's call for the drafting of a comprehensive instrument that will enable us to collectively and effectively fight terrorism.

Tensions and conflicts within and among States, which are detrimental to development and productivity, continue to affect many parts of the world. Such conflicts are fuelled by the ever-growing illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which cause the death and displacement of thousands of innocent people every year.

In that regard, the Kingdom of Swaziland supports United Nations efforts to enhance international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We further call for stern action to be taken against the mass production of such arms and weapons, in the same manner as we would deal with drug producers.

In this age of globalization, collective action will be necessary given that no single nation can find its own solutions to the challenges that we face. In that context, we welcome the various initiatives currently under way that are aimed at engaging regional organizations to do their part in responding to challenges within their regions.

These partnerships have been taking shape, and it is now up to us to give them substance by establishing appropriate frameworks, harmonizing methods and pooling capacities and resources for our work.

We in Africa consider cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations as being of great value. For example, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions continue to enhance peace initiatives in our region. However, I would like to stress here that

peacekeeping operations must go hand in hand with humanitarian efforts, with all of the urgency such situations require.

African leaders have demonstrated their political will, but they lack the resources to resolve crises in Africa. It is for that reason that we appeal to the international community to increase its support for the African Union, so as to enhance its capacity and response mechanism.

The Kingdom of Swaziland supports the call for an integrated approach to conflict resolution on our continent, and we also support the idea that the African Union is the organ best suited to mobilizing the efforts of its members, and, most important of all, to undertaking preventive action before a situation deteriorates.

The Kingdom of Swaziland remains concerned, however, by the conflict in the Middle East, which continues to threaten international peace and security. We believe that the road map holds the key to a positive outcome on the matter and urge the Quartet to continue its efforts to bridge the differences between the parties.

While welcoming the positive efforts by the Government of Israel to withdraw from some parts of the occupied territories, we would urge both parties to make a commitment to a comprehensive cessation of all violence, particularly that aimed at civilians, or else real progress will remain elusive. We remain hopeful that a solution to the conflict is imminent and continue to urge both parties to remain pragmatic and constructive in their quest for a solution.

The recent MDG follow-up summit succeeded in highlighting the plight of Africa with unprecedented clarity. The paradox of Africa is the extreme and increasing poverty of its people, who face many problems, including ill health, in a land so richly endowed with natural resources. This has become increasingly visible over the past decade, while we have seen evidence of a decline in poverty in other parts of the world.

In much of Africa, one of the major causes and consequences of poverty is disease, mainly malaria and HIV/AIDS. These diseases continue to compromise the health situation in African countries, halting and even reversing health gains achieved in earlier years. The poor are caught in a complex poverty trap in which low income leads to low consumption, which in turn results in low capacity and low productivity.

The Kingdom of Swaziland believes that there are relatively affordable technologies in our modern world that can mitigate the effect of disease on the poor. Experience has shown that proven strategies and health interventions can effectively and dramatically reduce the toll of these killer diseases. Fortunately, the MDGs point the way forward.

We believe that the creation of a world solidarity fund to eradicate extreme poverty and an accord within the framework of the World Trade Organization on patents are imperative and would be steps in the right direction, so that our countries can provide medicines to all.

Health is a strong entry point for poverty reduction, and alleviating the disease burden on the poor will contribute to the improvement of their social status.

This year also marks another milestone in the calendar of the movement for gender equality and the advancement of women: the 10-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In 1995 women gathered in Beijing and took a giant step forward. At that point, gender equality came to be recognized as a critical element of development and peace for each and every country. Some progress has been made. For example, many more girls are now enrolled in primary education. Investing in women is paramount for ensuring sustainable development. During this session, we must strive to meet the challenge that the Charter, established 60 years ago, articulated: the equal rights of men and women.

As we note this progress, we acknowledge the newer challenges that have emerged, such as the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on both women and girls. The HIV/AIDS scourge continues to plague our communities in Africa. The pandemic is as much a medical crisis as it is an economic, social and political crisis. With no cure insight, it will continue to deplete the essential financial and human resources so critical for development. For its part, my Government has been collaborating with local communities to find home-grown solutions to this problem. We continue to be grateful to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and other international agencies for the assistance and support they continue to provide us in our fight against this killer disease.

There is no doubt that developing countries are determined to fight poverty by creating jobs for our people. As we play our part in the mobilization of domestic resources, I would like to appeal to the developed world to meet its commitments by supporting us. Effective assistance by the international community to enhance the quality of economic choices is necessary, as is firm commitment without conditionalities.

The Kingdom of Swaziland believes that the Doha Development Agenda needs to be seriously advanced, with industrialized countries addressing the needs of developing countries. We call for better access to markets, in particular preferential markets with lowered tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade with industrialized countries.

On the question of reform of the United Nations, the Kingdom of Swaziland supports the wide range of proposals put forward to revitalize our Organization in its management of our affairs. We are of the view that the role of the General Assembly must be significantly strengthened to enable it to fulfil the tasks originally assigned to it by the Charter. The General Assembly, as the most democratic and representative body of the United Nations, should seize this opportunity to take the lead and thus demonstrate that it can express the political will of the people of the world.

In this regard, the Economic and Social Council too should be strengthened and given decision-making powers to implement the United Nations development agenda. We also believe that the Council should continue to be the overall coordinator of all development activities, including the Millennium Development Goals.

As we discuss greater representation and wider participation in the United Nations system, and as we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization, allow me to remind all of us gathered here that the more than 23 million people of the Republic of China remain hopeful that their voice in quest of participation in the very important United Nations system will soon be heard and positively responded to, so that they too can make their valuable contributions to the management and prosperity of world affairs. In the meantime, it is our continued hope that the existing issues between the parties will be resolved peacefully.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alisher Vohidov, Chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, let me take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Jan Eliasson on his election to the high position of President of the General Assembly and to wish him every success in guiding the work of the session. I would also like to thank his predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, for his able leadership as the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

It is obvious that the years-long process of reorganizing the entire system of international relations, in particular reform of the United Nations, has been unreasonably delayed. The 2005 summit was an important stage in exploring mutually acceptable formulas and in adopting goals whose implementation will lead us to the achievement of development and security.

Some of the decisions taken at the summit were medium-term and others long-term in nature. But, in our view, our primary task is to ensure their full implementation and not to allow inertia to impede this, as has been the case in the process of implementing the Millennium Development Goals.

Strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to achieve its goals in the three areas of development, security and human rights requires appropriate and active adaptation of the entire United Nations system. In this connection we consider it important to make the following comments. First, regardless of how important it is to reform and modernize the United Nations, there is, at present, no alternative to the Organization.

Secondly, further delay in reform of the most important bodies of the Organization will negatively impact its role in the modern world. There is a real danger that if the United Nations fails to take action, its coordinating role will gradually pass to other international structures, which lack the degree of broad representation that the United Nations enjoys.

Thirdly, the reform of three main bodies of the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — should provide balance in their work. In that regard, we consider it to be in our common interest that Security Council reform not be prolonged. It should be carried

out during the main part of the sixtieth session, before the year is out.

Fourthly, regional approaches should be given priority in dealing with development, security and human rights issues. The effectiveness of the principle of moving from regional to global approaches has already been proved on many occasions.

At present, Uzbekistan is implementing its national goals for economic development. It is carrying out economic reforms and taking measures to strengthen regional economic cooperation. However, any national efforts need to be supported by international economic structures. It is important that genuine conditions for an equal and fair international economic order be established. International donors must provide their full support for regional cooperation, and interested developing countries, in turn, need to make that kind of cooperation an integral part of their national strategy.

We believe it important for the concerned regional commissions of the United Nations — the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific — to strengthen their work to assist economic development in Central Asia, with a view to the greater and broader involvement of the countries of the region in international economic relations and investment cooperation. We are of the view that the international community, including the United Nations, should pay serious attention to the question of creating a Central Asian common market capable of ensuring the rational and effective use of the rich potential and resources of the region.

Uzbekistan supports all efforts to ensure sustainable development. Member States should pool their efforts to tackle problems of environmental degradation, shortages of water resources and drinking water and the deterioration of environmental conditions in cities and industrial zones. The global environmental agenda also calls for the pressing issues of desertification, biodiversity and climate change to be addressed.

Acts of terrorism carried out in many regions of the world, including Central Asia, have once again reminded us of the need for a critical assessment of the practice of international cooperation, including within the United Nations, to counter that plague of the twenty-first century, which threatens rich and poor States alike. It is unacceptable to further delay taking measures against those international centres of terrorism and extremism that — under the guise of espousing universal human values — in fact develop and disseminate ideologies of fanaticism. In that connection, we welcome the Security Council's most recent counter-terrorism resolution — resolution 1624 (2005) of 14 September 2005 — on the suppression of incitement to terrorist acts. At the same time, we believe it is crucial not to allow double standards in the implementation of that instrument. Those considerations should also be concerns in the process of drafting a universal convention on international terrorism.

A powerful accomplice of international terrorism is drug trafficking. Unfortunately, no actual progress has been seen in reducing drug production in Afghanistan. On that issue, we need to move urgently from words to action. In that connection, we are counting on the international community's firm support for Uzbekistan's initiative to establish a Central Asian regional information and coordination centre to counter transboundary crimes related to drug trafficking.

The President returned to the Chair.

Together with the pressing problems of development and security there is the issue of human rights. That issue is central to forging a new path in international relations, and to United Nations reform, in particular. In his report, "In larger freedom" (*A/59/2005*), the Secretary-General notes that international treaties adopted over the past six decades form an impressive normative basis for ensuring full international acknowledgement and respect for human rights and freedoms. There is no doubt that protection of human rights needs to be one of the core tasks for the United Nations.

Uzbekistan is a party to all the major international human rights instruments and it is steadily moving towards democracy and the formation of a civil society. One important step in that direction was the decision to abolish the death penalty in the country, as proposed by Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov.

We are convinced that reform of the United Nations human rights system needs to be carried out step by step, consistently, and taking into account the concerns of all interested parties. Along with political rights, it is necessary to strengthen other human rights,

including socio-economic and environmental rights. We reiterate our position that it is unacceptable to politicize the issue of human rights or to be selective in reviewing human rights situations, even more so when United Nations bodies or mechanisms are involved.

The establishment of a stable and long-lasting peace in Afghanistan is of strategic value for Uzbekistan. In that context, we welcome the parliamentary elections that were held in Afghanistan on 18 September. That event has become another important step towards restoring statehood to Afghanistan. Uzbekistan supports the efforts aimed at the prompt stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan. Considering Afghanistan to be a part of the Central Asian region, we encourage its active participation in regional integration processes. Uzbekistan is providing broad support to the Afghan people, as well as to relevant mechanisms of the United Nations and other international organizations, to aid the reconstruction process in that country.

Five years after the Millennium Summit, Member States have adopted an historic decision to launch reform and renovate the mechanisms of the United Nations. We have a unique opportunity to carry out more far-reaching reforms to adapt the Organization to new realities. The aim of those reforms is to ensure the well-being and prosperity of all our peoples. Today the time has come to make decisions and take action. Any protraction of the process could seriously paralyse the system of international relations, allow current threats and challenges to become irreversible, and lead to a situation in which the international community is unable to take timely and appropriate measures.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the readiness of Uzbekistan to cooperate actively with other States in creating more effective and just United Nations.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Vsevolod Grigore, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Grigore (Republic of Moldova): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. My delegation is confident that your knowledge and vast professional experience will ensure strong and competent leadership of the Assembly.

Let me also pay well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, whose tireless efforts guided Member States through the difficult negotiations that resulted in the adoption of the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

A few days ago, speaking from this rostrum, President Vladimir Voronin of the Republic of Moldova reaffirmed my country's unwavering support for the United Nations and its commitment to work together with other Member States to renew and strengthen the United Nations system. We need an effective United Nations, a richly diverse organization that is united in its resolve and able to address the challenges and threats confronting the contemporary world.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome provides a fair assessment of the threats and challenges facing us in the areas of peace, security, development and human rights and rightly emphasizes their interconnected nature. World leaders agreed on a number of concrete actions and steps that need to be undertaken in all those areas. Those measures might not meet everyone's expectations, but they reflect a degree of consensus that is both challenging and inspiring.

Since one of the world summit's aims was to assess implementation of the Millennium Declaration, it is heartening to see the strong and unambiguous commitment of donor and developing countries to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The measures outlined in the areas of financing for development, debt cancellation, trade promotion, investment and other specific areas of development need to be fully implemented. Developed and developing countries must build their declared global partnership for development on the basis of mutual trust and respect, while the effectiveness and quality of aid can be ensured through a balance of appropriate financing, good governance and sound policies.

In the area of peace and security, the Republic of Moldova welcomes the unequivocal condemnation of terrorism and supports the call to conclude and agree on, during the current session of the General Assembly, a comprehensive convention on international terrorism containing a legal definition of terrorism. During the 2005 summit, the Republic of Moldova signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which is further proof of our ongoing commitment to multilateral efforts aimed at

strengthening the United Nations counter-terrorism legal framework.

My country welcomes the decision to create a Peacebuilding Commission, which it considers to be one of the main achievements of the summit. As envisioned, that body has the potential to bring much-needed coherence to our strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery, provided that we succeed in making it operational by the end of this year.

Unfortunately, the outcome document pays far less attention to conflict prevention and conflict resolution, especially with regard to internal conflicts. Many regional organizations have been entrusted, under the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter, with dealing with a number of conflicts that are at the centre of the Security Council's attention. But, as the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (*A/59/565*) rightly pointed out, the efforts of regional organizations do not absolve the United Nations of its primary responsibilities for peace and security. The United Nations needs to reach out more systematically to those regional organizations, and steps should be taken to increase their accountability, particularly in the case of protracted or frozen conflicts, where a situation does not improve or even worsens over the years.

We would also like to recall the High-level Panel's proposals aimed at enhancing the capabilities and the role of the United Nations in conflict mediation, which were set aside in the discussions. One of those proposals was to give the Department of Political Affairs additional resources and to restructure it in order to provide more consistent and professional mediation support. No conflict in the world should be left without the attention of the United Nations, regardless of whether it is on the Security Council's agenda or not.

Like many Member States, we regret the failure to reach agreement on a section on non-proliferation and disarmament in the summit outcome document. But that must not preclude further common efforts to build consensus around the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

We appreciate the outcome document's support for the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. But to make a real difference, Member States should expedite and conclude negotiations on legally binding agreements on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, as well as their brokering and transfer.

The Republic of Moldova fully endorses the commitment to create a Human Rights Council. We look forward to speedy and productive negotiations on the Council's mandate, size, membership and working procedures. We have high expectations of that standing body's ability to protect and even enforce respect for fundamental human rights, especially in cases of humanitarian crimes and violations in conflict zones outside the control of sovereign States. My country also supports the decision to strengthen the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and its field offices.

As a country that has placed the concepts of democracy and rule of law at its core since gaining independence, the Republic of Moldova welcomes the reaffirmation of democracy as a universal value in the outcome document and the creation of the new Democracy Fund.

The success of United Nations reform depends on the ability of Member States to implement measures that revitalize the General Assembly and enhance the effectiveness of the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat. Although the issue of the enlargement of the Security Council proved to be highly divisive, an enormous amount of work has been done to explore different options. We all agree that the expanded Council should be representative, efficient and transparent. We should continue to seek consensus based on those principles.

The triangle of development, peace and freedom is of direct relevance to the Republic of Moldova. Our young democracy is struggling with the difficulties of transition and suffers — as it has for more than 13 years — from a protracted, unsolved conflict inspired and supported from abroad. It sees the fundamental freedoms of a significant number of its citizens violated by an aggressive separatist regime.

As representatives of my country have stressed in the Assembly over the years, settling the internal conflict in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova is our greatest priority. Separatism is not only the main threat to our country's peace and security; it is also the main obstacle to the further consolidation of

the independence and the statehood of the Republic of Moldova and a hindrance to its economic development. The reintegration of the country, with respect for the principle of territorial integrity and sovereignty, is a prerequisite for a stable and prosperous Republic of Moldova able to achieve its internal and external strategic objectives.

The Republic of Moldova has worked faithfully and constructively towards that end for many years, looking for a peaceful, just and lasting solution to political conflict and fostering dialogue with the self-appointed Transnistrian leaders, with the help of mediating countries and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Unfortunately, all efforts have been in vain and have only demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the old format. With support and encouragement from abroad, the separatist leaders have been using the negotiation process to claim legitimacy for themselves as the representatives of the will of the inhabitants of the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, and have promoted the idea of a pseudo-State, for which there are no ethnic, religious or other plausible grounds. In the meantime, the region has become a centre of illegal and criminal economic activity, trafficking, arms production and proliferation and a threat to the stability and security of that part of the European continent. The region's multinational population lives under constant pressure from the separatist regime's propaganda and under the surveillance of its security structures. The people of the region are constantly being intimidated and harassed.

That situation cannot go on indefinitely. There is a growing sense of urgency in Moldovan society, expressed in the unprecedented consensus and the resolve of all political parties with respect to the ways and means of settling the conflict. Political momentum is growing, as Ukraine has advanced a new plan for a settlement. Following that development, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova passed several laws related to the Ukrainian plan, including the law on fundamental regulations of the special legal status of settlements on the left bank of the Nistru River — Transnistria — of 22 July, 2005.

The Republic of Moldova has been calling for a number of concrete actions to create the conditions for a lasting solution to the conflict, including the following elements.

First, our Government has called for the complete, unconditional and transparent withdrawal of foreign troops and munitions from the territory of Moldova, in accordance with the relevant decisions of the OSCE Istanbul Summit. The foreign military presence is used as external pressure and provides a political shield for the separatist authorities.

Secondly, it has called for the establishment of transparent and effective control over the Transnistrian segment of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border. We highly appreciate the decision of the European Union to assist in monitoring that border segment, which should help curb illegal commercial activities and all trafficking. In that context, we support the early signing of the memorandum of understanding on the European Commission Border Assistance Mission to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, and we express our satisfaction at the readiness of the Ukrainian authorities to cooperate in that respect.

Thirdly, the Government has called for the democratization and demilitarization of the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova through the development of civil society, political parties and a free press, as well as through respect for human rights and freedoms, the disarmament and dismantlement of illegal military units, militias and security structures. Only after creating a vibrant and politically open society — a process that should be carried out under the close monitoring of the international community — can one envisage the possibility of free and democratic elections in Transnistria to establish genuine, responsible representatives of the population of the region.

The Republic of Moldova has been pleading for a new negotiating format by connecting the European Union and the United States. New inputs, ideas and practical contributions are needed to move the process forward. The same is true of the current peacekeeping mechanism, which is far from meeting the recognized standards of an unbiased attitude and should be replaced by an international mechanism of military and civil observers under an OSCE mandate.

The reintegration of the country would give new impetus to our efforts for sustained economic development. The country's strong economic performance, reflected in its stable and sustained economic growth over the past four years, as well as the quality of our country's poverty reduction and

economic growth strategy paper and the Government's steady commitment to fully implementing it, demonstrate that the Republic of Moldova is on the right track to increasing the well-being of our citizens and improving the country's socio-economic indicators, including through achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Republic of Moldova has irreversibly chosen the path of European integration as the strategic objective of its foreign policy. We are aware of the full extent of changes, reforms and improvements we have to achieve internally to meet the rigorous European standards for economic development, good governance, democracy, political freedom and human rights. Our optimism with respect to Moldova's successful achievement of its aspirations is rooted in the firm will of the entire society to mobilize our resources to achieve that objective.

Successful and complete implementation of the EU-Moldova Action Plan will give us the opportunity to rise to a new level of contractual relations with the European Union, as set out in that document. It will also be decisive for achieving further internal reforms and general progress in the country. The recent first evaluation of the implementation of the EU-Moldova Action Plan showed encouraging results and steady progress. The Government is committed to the full implementation of that comprehensive document, which will open, we hope, a clear European perspective for our country.

My country is ready to work tirelessly to make our Organization stronger, more efficient and able to fulfil the ambitious goals set by our leaders at the 2005 world summit. Only through collective action carried out in a spirit of global partnership will we be able to create a better, more secure world for the generations to come.

The President: I now call His Excellency Mr. Crispin Gregoire, chairman of the delegation of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Mr. Gregoire (Dominica): Mr. President, please allow me, on behalf of the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, to extend our congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. My delegation is confident that, with your experience and diplomatic skills, you will preside over the Assembly with the effectiveness and the dedication required to take us through the agenda of the sixtieth session. We extend to your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping of Gabon, our sincere appreciation for his stewardship of the fifty-ninth session and for his tireless efforts to guide the preparation of the outcome document. Our warm tribute is also due to the Secretary-General for his unqualified dedication to this institution.

Allow me at the outset to convey our deepest sympathies and condolences to the Government and the people of the United States of America in the wake of the deaths and widespread destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. We remain concerned about the potential devastation that Hurricane Rita is likely to unleash in coming days.

One week ago, world leaders gathered here at the historic High-level Plenary Meeting and demonstrated their collective political will to overcome the many challenges facing the world. They charted a clear direction for a future of peace and prosperity for all humankind. They reaffirmed their commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), underscored the continuing relevance of the United Nations and its indispensable role in the collective management of the many problems faced by the global community, and provided clear recommendations for the reform of the Organization.

The outcome document, while falling short of our expectations, presents a platform for multilateral solutions to the broad range of global problems related to development, peace and security, human rights, the rule of law and the reinvigoration of the United Nations. The Commonwealth of Dominica is committed to the Millennium Development Goals and embraces the renewed pledge to save humanity from the scourge of war, disease, famine and poverty. We will work with all Member States to ensure a future based on hope and prosperity instead of one of despair for the poor and the marginalized of this world. We now have before us the monumental task of ensuring implementation and tangible outcomes.

Fulfilling that task, which our esteemed leaders have accorded to us, requires the determined will of all Member States. It will also require a commitment to the collective will and a retreat from preoccupation with self-interest and narrow national agendas. If nothing else, the sixtieth session should go down in history as the session at which we, the Member States, renewed our commitment to the ideal that inspired the

visionary founders: building a peaceful and prosperous world in which all peoples live together in harmony, free from want and fear.

Dominica, a small island developing State, welcomes the particular attention given in the outcome document to the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States. It is a source of great encouragement to us that the Member States of the United Nations have demonstrated an appreciation of the challenges that confront all small island developing States.

The Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action is a realistic and attainable blueprint that underscores the pivotal areas for interventions to build the capacity of small island developing States to confront their various sustainable development challenges. We appreciate the support of our friends and development partners and appeal for their continuing commitment to the proper and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

Progress in the development arena will require strong political will for the implementation of the commitments we have undertaken and which we reaffirmed together in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting. These concern primarily the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the revitalization of the international partnership for development, with the attendant mobilization of financial resources, as well as the fulfilment of the commitment made by many developed countries to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance by 2015. Dominica takes this opportunity to express its appreciation to those countries that affirmed their intention to fulfil their obligations in that regard.

My delegation feels strongly that the consensus we reached in the High-level Plenary Meeting represents a good foundation for a greater consensus towards achieving the development priorities of the developing countries. The United Nations must play a pivotal role in ensuring that the issues of trade, debt relief, investment and industrial modernization receive the highest priority if the global objective is to raise the standard of living of the people of the developing countries.

We congratulate the Group of Eight for the commitment adopted at the Gleneagles Summit, giving much-needed debt relief to 18 heavily indebted poor countries. However, a similar initiative is now required for small island developing States and middle income developing countries that are being strangled by heavy debt burdens and the simultaneous erosion of their preferential trading arrangements.

South-South cooperation has been growing over the last two decades, and through that mechanism many avenues have opened for enhanced trade relations and cooperation in the transfer of know-how and technology. Dominica welcomes the establishment of the South Fund for Development and Humanitarian Assistance and the generous initial pledges of the Governments of Qatar, India and China to this Fund. Equally deserving of commendation is Venezuela's initiative in the Caribbean, called Petrocaribe, which will help Caribbean countries to respond to the challenges posed by the high price of oil.

Aid without trade cannot be a viable proposition for small island States like Dominica. We are fully cognizant that only trade can be the engine of growth and development. Dominica and other banana-producing States in the Caribbean have had difficulties responding to the stance of multinational corporations from the United States and allied Latin American countries that have challenged the preferential access for our bananas in the European Union. We hope that reason will prevail, as we count on a fair resolution of the present banana trade impasse in Europe. Only a positive outcome will avert a future of persistent poverty for banana farmers and workers in the Caribbean.

Let me reiterate that small, vulnerable island States like Dominica need time to adjust to the transition to a fully liberalized global trading regime. Dominica has made admirable progress towards realization of the MDGs, but such gains could simply vanish like a thief in the night if we lose the preferential access to the European market for our bananas in 2006. For this reason we appeal to the international community to demonstrate the necessary political will to ensure that the Doha Development Round takes these concerns into account in the quest for a fair and equitable trading system for the benefit of all our people.

The frequency of devastating storms in Asia, the Caribbean and the southern United States and long periods of drought in Africa require a more coordinated

and organized international response. The United Nations needs to significantly enhance its capacity to respond in a timely manner to disasters in the more vulnerable developing countries. Last year many Caribbean countries were battered by hurricanes, and the Eastern Caribbean nation of Grenada was in the unfortunate situation of facing the onslaught of two major hurricanes in one calendar year. Grenada still needs additional assistance from the international community, and we appeal to all Member States to lend such assistance.

Dominica has had its share of hurricane devastation. Late last year we experienced devastation from a series of earthquakes which inflicted significant damage on our fragile infrastructure. We continue to be vigilant and have put in place a national disaster strategy to mitigate the adverse effects of such disasters on our population. My delegation once again reiterates the appeal made last year in this Hall by Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit for the creation of a global insurance fund to assist countries devastated by natural disasters. We call on the international community to fully implement the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, adopted at this year's World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

Climate change is wreaking havoc on small island developing States. It is time for all Member States to accept that climate change and global warming are real and that they are caused by human activity. All Member States must implement the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol.

My delegation is concerned about the continuing instability in Haiti. We support the role of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, but we appreciate that its limited size and resources are inadequate to respond to the complicated political situation in which Haiti finds itself. Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) States have already committed technical assistance for the elections and are cognizant that elections alone will not bring stability to Haiti. Stability will require the accelerated disbursement of pledged financial resources, more rapid implementation of social and economic project activities, and peacebuilding initiatives.

Terrorism remains a great threat to peace and security at the national, regional and international levels. Dominica condemns all acts, methods and practices of terrorism. The recent attacks in London and in Egypt underscore the danger of terrorism, which transcends national boundaries and does not distinguish between peoples, cultures or religions. Dominica is making a great effort to comply with the obligations of the various counter-terrorism conventions and pledges its support for the conclusion of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

My delegation regrets the failure of the outcome document to address non-proliferation and disarmament in the area of weapons of mass destruction. Relative stability in today's world should not make us complacent and lead us to compromise on the need for total disarmament. Our continuing lack of action on this issue has not served to enhance global security with respect to the threat posed by these weapons.

Small arms and light weapons pose a great challenge to the maintenance of peace and security in the Caribbean region. Narcotics trafficking has brought with it increased circulation of small arms and light weapons, which has led to a sharp increase in crime and fatal injuries. Dominica therefore welcomes the agreement on an international instrument that would enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable manner. What is still needed, however, is a legally binding international instrument that will regulate, control and monitor the illicit trade in small arms, including their transfer to non-State actors.

Dominica is appreciative of the recognition accorded to indigenous people in the outcome document. As part of our commitment to the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, my delegation will work with other Member States towards the submission to the General Assembly of a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.

The future of the United Nations depends on full implementation of an institutional reform agenda that addresses revitalization of the General Assembly, reform of the Security Council and improved governance in the Secretariat. General Assembly revitalization must result in the strengthening of the Assembly's vital role as the chief deliberative, policymaking and implementation-monitoring body of the United Nations. The Secretariat needs to urgently address eroding public confidence through timely

implementation of the proposals for improvement in its management and oversight. Reform of the Security Council must be pursued to enhance the Council's accountability, transparency and efficiency. Such reform must, at a minimum, ensure that the Council's membership is more representative and remedy the continuing imbalance in the representation of Africa in the permanent membership.

We welcome the initiative to establish a Democracy Fund. Consistent with our support for the promotion of fundamental human freedoms and values, we support the establishment of a Human Rights Council. We also support the proposed Peacebuilding Commission as an advisory body.

Let me conclude by saying that we have a loaded agenda for the next decade, and that there are numerous challenges ahead. We wish to emphasize that that agenda can be realized only through multilateral action. As we look ahead to 2015, we have the honourable duty to make the United Nations truly serve the people of this global village. We have the obligation to ensure that we the peoples of the United Nations can truly live our lives in larger freedom.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou, chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Cameroon.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I am particularly pleased to express to you, Sir, Cameroon's heartfelt congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. I wish you every success in carrying out your noble mandate and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation. I pay a warm tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Francophonie of the Gabonese Republic. His great talent, consummate negotiating skill and competence contributed decisively to the success of the work of the fifty-ninth session. To the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, I once again express Cameroon's full appreciation for his tireless efforts and dedication in the service of the Organization and its ideals.

At your wise suggestion, Mr. President, the main theme of our debate is the implementation and follow-up of the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. That reflects the great importance of this debate — importance clearly shown by the strong participation in it. My country is pleased to add its voice to those of the representatives of 184 other countries, who have already spoken during this exercise.

Cameroon fully supports the outcome document adopted at the end of that historic summit. Some would have preferred that it be stronger, others that it be more proactive. Cameroon believes it is a balanced and realistic document with regard to all the major global concerns now considered to be priorities. Furthermore, it is a document that reflects a new consensus on the role of the United Nations and its place in today's international system.

Our heads of State or Government took stock of the main challenges of our time and of the priority actions that we must take together to build a genuine global partnership for development and to ensure lasting collective peace and security. They also set out guidelines to be followed over the next decade to complete the whole United Nations renewal process and the effective achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The time has come to move from words to action. Indeed, it is only by implementing those commitments that we can measure their value, force and relevance.

It is indisputable that the world has made considerable progress in implementing some of the MDGs. But there is another undeniable fact that is far less encouraging: the situation in Africa. Africa is the world's only region that, with 10 years until the deadline, is alarmingly behind in implementing the MDGs. If it does not receive substantial external assistance very soon, most of the Goals will not be attained by 2015. Most of them may remain a mirage for a long time.

We are aware that the current economic growth rate in our countries averages approximately 3 per cent . That is not sufficient to create the macroeconomic conditions necessary to achieve the MDGs. Today — particularly in sub-Saharan Africa — without large-scale job creation, revenue creation, a massive inflow of private capital or official development assistance, an effective global and sustainable solution to the nagging issue of debt, and equitable participation in world trade, our efforts will be doomed to failure.

For their part, the Governments of African countries, who have the primary responsibility for their own development, are implementing national poverty

reduction strategies in keeping with the need to achieve the MDGs. With specific regard to Cameroon, the Government is tackling that with determination. Furthermore, the implementation of its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is supported by the donor community.

My country has begun to review its strategy to ensure that it is fully in line with the Millennium Development Goals. It is also implementing, with the same determination, its national programme of governance. Thus, the Government of Cameroon has stepped up its efforts to combat corruption and has committed itself to a more transparent and effective management of public finances.

My country would have liked to see more ambitious and courageous commitments adopted together with a specific timetable for the development of Africa. Nevertheless, if the commitments made by world leaders in the outcome document are speedily implemented, Africa would make considerable progress in implementing most of the Millennium Development Goals and could even — depending on the adequate mobilization of national and external resources and the political will to take action — achieve all those goals by the agreed date.

During a recent crisis, the United Nations was nearly shaken to its very foundations. During those events, our sometimes differing views about our system of peace and collective security became openly apparent. Fortunately, given the need to overcome all the global threats that weigh on our collective security, the summit reached a healthy consensus on the essential nature of joint actions that we need to take for the peaceful settlement of disputes, counteracting terrorism and the maintenance and consolidation of peace.

Nonetheless, the process of revitalizing the Organization will remain incomplete until we are able to agree on the enlargement of the Security Council. May I recall that, as the President of Cameroon, His Excellence Mr. Paul Biya, declared on 14 September, Cameroon remains faithful to the African position on reform of the Security Council. This reform is necessary and must take place soon, bringing nations together rather than dividing them. This is the firm conviction of Cameroon, and my country will continue, however long it takes, to work with other States to overcome our differences and forge a solid consensus in order to achieve this very important reform.

Recourse to law for the peaceful settlement of disputes has, necessarily, as a corollary, the obligation to implement fully, willingly and in good faith the decisions of the International Court of Justice. This is how we understand the reference made in the outcome document concerning "the obligation of States to settle their disputes by peaceful means in accordance with Chapter VI of the Charter, including, when appropriate, by the use of the International Court of Justice" (*resolution 60/1, para. 73*).

Implementation of a decision of a court through positive negotiations is based first and foremost on a peaceful course of action, specifically on the basis of a deep commitment to the values and principles enshrined in the Charter. In no case may that be interpreted as an open possibility to renounce even partially the fundamental elements of that decision. Very much to the contrary.

The outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting allows for coordinating the activities of the principal bodies of the Organization within the framework of their mandate under the Charter for the prevention of armed conflicts and settlement of disputes. Cameroon therefore believes it desirable that we should find ways to ensure that Member States, through the Security Council and in the General Assembly, are informed formally of the status of implementation of judgements handed down by the International Court of Justice, as they are of the Court's annual activities.

The Secretary-General could thus inform the Security Council regularly and in detail and report to Member States as is done in his report to the General Assembly on the activities of the Organization.

Good practices in this area would take root and inspire us all. In that way, we would be able to identify potential sources of conflict at a very early stage through difficulties identified and to make timely recommendations to prevent them.

Cameroon, which looks forward to the rapid creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, counts on your wisdom to ensure that the negotiating process that will lead to their creation will be open, transparent and inclusive.

During the present session, which coincides with the Organization's sixtieth anniversary, we should be inspired by the visionary dynamism provided by the heads of State and Government. This is a new opportunity, perhaps one of the best opportunities, along with the Millennium Summit, to make a decisive contribution to improving the human condition and achieving an ideal world where all women, men and children live free from fear, hunger and disease.

It is our responsibility here and now to fulfil the generous promises made by our leaders to humanity a week ago. Let us do so without making excuses, without seeking loopholes. Let us do it now.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate. Several representatives have requested to exercise the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for a second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats. I call on the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Irhiam (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your vast experience and competence in presiding over our discussions, and I wish you every success. I would also like to point to the excellent relations between the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and friendly Sweden.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria mentioned the situation of the Libyan children who were deliberately and grievously afflicted by the Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian physician with the AIDS virus. He also referred to the protection of human rights.

It is true that describing the deaths of a few children and the injuries of many as a tragedy does not fully reflect the suffering of their families and loved ones. It is more than a tragedy — it is a major disaster in every possible meaning of the word. It is a disaster unprecedented in the annals of human history. Thus, if we are to truly protect human rights, the rights of Libyan children must first and foremost be protected, along with those of their families and relatives, but not those of the Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian physician. The disaster has affected not only Benghazi city, but all of the decent, generous people of Libya, who were deeply shocked by that horrible tragedy.

The President of Bulgaria and other foreign officials who were visiting Libya at the time saw the extent of the tragedy. They were informed of the legal procedures established to deal with the accused. The trials were fair and transparent, and included the participation of Bulgarian representatives and several representatives of diplomatic missions in Libya. The trial lasted several months and resulted in a just conviction. The results of the appeal to the Supreme Court are pending.

I would recall that international conferences organized under United Nations auspices have consistently reaffirmed the supremacy of law and that there can be no good governance without respect for the law and the judiciary.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Two days ago, the General Assembly heard Mr. Sam Kutesa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, describe at length his country's view of the situation in the Great Lakes region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My delegation deeply regrets the fact that Mr. Kutesa's comments were disrespectful, discourteous and totally unacceptable.

The representative of a country that has produced and continues to produce the most Ubu-like dictators that our region has ever seen has nothing to teach anyone. By calling into question the sacrosanct principle of the inviolability of borders since decolonization, Mr. Kutesa merely revealed what we all knew already: his country's irredentist designs on the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the purely mercantilist aim of making a grab for the eastern provinces of my country. The objective of the Ugandan authorities, which has been denounced here at the United Nations, is to dismember Africa for the purposes of attaining economic domination and control of significant sources of raw materials in Congolese territory, which have considerable reserves of raw materials and strategic minerals.

The Ugandan sponsors of the pillaging of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's natural resources and other wealth are well known. Their names figure prominently in every report of the relevant United Nations expert groups.

Mr. Kutesa's statement also demonstrated his country's lack of sincerity and involvement in the peaceful settlement of the crisis in the Great Lakes

region. Uganda seems to be seeking a new pretext to justify its negative and harmful interference in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Coming at a time when, thanks to the concerted efforts of the countries of Central Africa, most of the countries of the Great Lakes region, the African Union, the United Nations and interested bilateral partners, a happy end to what might be called the first African world war is at hand, Mr. Kutesa's remarks were most unfortunate.

The wise Mr. Kutesa has revolutionized international law with his introduction of the concept of so-called provisional immunity. Nevertheless, in our view, all Ugandan nationals who have Congolese blood on their hands and whose armed groups pursue a policy of terrorism against our civilian populations will ultimately have to answer for their actions before either the International Criminal Court or ad hoc tribunals.

Moreover, Uganda's Congolese puppets — the very people Mr. Kutesa wishes to see integrated into the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — are, like Colonel Kakolele Bwambale, comfortably ensconced in Kampala. These are rebel officers who had been nominated in the context of the integration of the armed forces command; they include leaders of armed groups in Ituri and mere warlords. They have all gone to Uganda to seek the support of the official authorities and to organize themselves in preparation to attack the Democratic Republic of the Congo and roil the transition process there.

All those Congolese puppets and their Ugandan masters are also responsible for terrible large-scale massacres of men, women and children; they practice summary and extrajudicial executions and systematic rape; engage in major violations of human rights and international humanitarian law; and deliberately and criminally spread HIV/AIDS. Fortunately, with the help of the international community, those Congolese puppets and Ugandan bandits will not be with us much longer.

Mr. Kutesa dared to refer to the difficulty of disarming the so-called negative forces. I would recall here that, at the height of Uganda's aggression, when it occupied more than half of our territory, it was incapable of arresting even one Ugandan rebel. Moreover, the supposedly powerful Uganda army was ignominiously defeated on three occasions, most notably in the martyr city of Kisangani.

Clearly, everyone in the Great Lakes region has suffered that futile and senseless war for too long. Our entire population hopes for peace in which we can renew the relationships of friendship, trust and peaceful coexistence of the past. I assure the Assembly that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is firmly committed to the peace process because it is in our interests and in the interests of the entire Great Lakes region.

In conclusion, my country believes that, in order to persuade Uganda sincerely to embark on the road to peace, the international community, represented by all Member States present here, must impose a comprehensive embargo on the sale of arms and suspend bilateral and multilateral assistance to that country in order to cut the link between that assistance and the conflict, which is being fought to perpetuate the illegal exploitation of our country's natural resources and other wealth. We must take care, however, not to penalize the Ugandan people.

The international community should also adopt protective measures, including the freezing of assets and a travel ban for high-ranking officials of the Ugandan oligarchy. The international community should call on Uganda to respect the various commitments it has made in all freedom, be they in the framework of existing United Nations mechanisms or the quartet under United States leadership.

Mr. Mammadov (Azerbaijan): I am taking the floor to respond to the Armenian representative's misstatement in reply to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan on 18 September.

Contrary to the Armenian representative's presentation — or, rather, misrepresentation — the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan did not refer to the territories surrounding the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, but to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has never resorted to military aggression. Armenia, having failed to achieve its political goal of obtaining the secession of Nagorny Karabakh from Azerbaijan, started the expulsion of Azerbaijanis from Armenia and resorted, subsequently, to military aggression in order to acquire, forcibly, the territory of the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and to institute ethnic cleansing in the occupied Azerbaijani territories. The culmination of those acts of

savagery was the Khojaly massacre — the brutal slaughter of about 700 innocent civilians.

Like the Security Council, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe — in a resolution adopted this January, the text of which is annexed to document A/59/689 — specifically established the fact of the Armenian occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan. That resolution unequivocally reconfirmed that Nagorny Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan, decisively called for respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and its internationally recognized borders, underlined the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory and resolutely demanded an immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all occupying forces from all occupied areas of Azerbaijan and the establishment of conditions for the safe return of displaced persons to their places of permanent residence.

The fact-finding mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that was dispatched to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan — the report of which the Armenian representative also misinterpreted — was made feasible by the General Assembly's just and fair approach in response to the grave concern expressed by Azerbaijan. The fact-finding mission confirmed the fact of the Armenian settlement of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, the regional population of which had been completely expelled. In their conclusions and recommendations, as contained in annex I to document A/59/747, the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group requested that any further settlement of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan should be discouraged and urged that changes be avoided in the demographic structure of the region, which would make difficult any further efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement of the conflict in and around the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Out of goodwill, Azerbaijan suggested the use of the so-called Lachin corridor as a road of peace by both sides in both directions. The rejection of the road of peace is further proof of the destructive Armenian position. However, Azerbaijan still hopes that the Armenian side will not miss this chance to advance the negotiation process, with the assistance of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmen, in accordance with the key understanding reached within the Prague process.

The President: The general debate of the General Assembly has now concluded. On behalf of the Assembly, I should like to thank all of the speakers for their contributions.

The theme of the debate was the follow-up to and implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Over the past seven days we have heard many thoughtful and constructive interventions on that subject. As at the world summit, speaker after speaker stressed the need to make faster and more substantial progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Time after time, as Members may recall, speakers emphasized the fact that the battle against poverty is one that we must all fight — and win — together. The strong message is that the political momentum for development — life and dignity for all — which has grown this year, must be maintained and strengthened.

In recognition of that, we should explore ways in which we can speed up progress on development in a way that complements the work of other parts of the United Nations and other international economic and social bodies.

There were other widely shared concerns expressed in this debate. Many emphasized the necessity to make progress in establishing the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council and in moving management reform forward. Terrorism and the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity were also highlighted. Many expressed disappointment that a text on disarmament and non-proliferation was not included in the Summit Outcome document.

However, we should note and welcome the widespread recognition that development, security and respect for human rights are interconnected and that the peoples of the world — our peoples — need and want a reformed and rejuvenated United Nations.

Understandably, there has not been consensus on how every item on our agenda should be taken forward. But there has also been a widely held view that the General Assembly now needs to move quickly on follow-up and implementation, so that the political energy generated through the outcome document negotiations, the summit and the general debate is not lost.

Over the next few days, I will reflect carefully on the points made during the debate. I will also make myself available next week to meet Member States, either individually or in groups, to hear more of their views on priorities and ways of working. I would encourage any Member State which has further thoughts on follow-up and implementation to contact me or my Office as early as possible next week.

Taking into account the views expressed, I intend to write to all Member States before the end of next week outlining the proposed way forward. Shortly thereafter, I plan to convene an open meeting to involve all Member States in the final consolidation of the proposed programme of work.

Once that process of consultation is completed, work on follow-up will have to begin without delay. As I said when I opened the debate on 17 September, the world will be watching us closely. The extent to which we — all of us in the Assembly — can muster a spirit of urgency and common purpose in the coming days and weeks will ultimately determine whether the world summit will go down in history as a missed opportunity for the United Nations or, as I hope, the start of the most substantial reform programme in the history of the Organization.

We will need to work efficiently, with civility, discipline and a readiness to compromise for the greater good. I want to assure members that I intend to conduct this work with transparency, fairness and respect for the General Assembly's central and crucial role in these negotiations. It is here, and only here, that negotiations will take place and decisions will be made. I look forward to working with all members in that spirit as we shoulder our historic responsibility together.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 8? I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 7.05 p.m.